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The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

HOT ROCK, COLD WAR

Lenin Stadium the other weekend resembled a heavy-metal Woodstock as Bon Jovi, Mötley Crüe and Ozzy Osborne jammed with Soviet *metallistis* in the Moscow Music Peace Festival.

The festival is expected to raise $3 million and 1 million rubles for the treatment of drug and alcohol abuse in both countries. But if Moscow and Washington are serious about waging the war on drugs and creating more humane societies, they need to cut heavy-metal defense programs.

In July, top Soviet military adviser Sergei Akhromeyev conveyed a version of that message in his four-hour testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, and he received a standing ovation from members of Congress.

But while a Soviet general on Capitol Hill and American rock bands in Moscow might suggest that the East-West chill is ending, cold war budgets in the United States remain firmly in place. President Bush has responded grudgingly to Mikhail Gorbachev's arms control overtures—"dithering," a *New York Times* editorial said—and Congress, which is contemplating small cuts in defense programs, seems unwilling to adjust spending to the changing global realities.

Members of the new Soviet Parliament, on the other hand, have proposed a worthy arms control initiative. On August 1 the legislators called on the U.S. Congress to endorse a moratorium on nuclear explosions and a ban on all nuclear tests: "Our powers could demonstrate to the world community the seriousness of our intentions to do away with nuclear rivalry and of not merely quantitatively curtailing nuclear arsenals, but of ruling out the appearance of even more refined types of weapons employing nuclear technology." The deputies declared the Soviet Union's readiness, "on any day and at any time, on a reciprocal basis," to put a halt to nuclear testing. That's the kind of heavy mettle we need.

FLAG-SAVING
Melvin L. Wulf

MERCHANTS OF THE MAGI-MART
Alexander Cockburn

WORLD POLITICAL CULTURE
Fred Halliday

THE S&L NONDEBATE
David Corn

MINORITY LEGAL SCHOLARS
Jon Wiener

THE SELLING OF WOODSTOCK
Gene Santoro

ISLAM'S BENT SWORD

HEZBOLLAH—SOUND AND FUTILE FURY

KEN SEIGNEURIE AND TAREK NASSAR

West Beirut

No would-be savior of Lebanon has whipped up such passions of euphoria and terror, lock-step loyalty and bitter enmity, religious righteousness and religious wrath as the Islamic fundamentalist movement known as Hezbollah (Party of God). The world watched in amazement and horror as suicide car-bombers left the American and French multinational peacekeeping forces decimated under mountains of concrete in 1983; as Israel turned and fled Lebanon; and as thousands of Hezbollah militants marched in Beirut, beating themselves raw on the chest, in 1985. By early 1986, Islamic revolution seemed inevitable for at least large swaths of the country. Then mighty Hezbollah seemed to slacken, into what is now just another eddy swirling in the torrent of violence that is Lebanon.

General Michel Aoun's Christian-dominated Lebanese Army has been engaged in intense fighting with some 30,000 Syrian soldiers on Lebanese soil. The destruction, even by Lebanese standards, is apocalyptic: By mid-August, shelling in the capital reached a thousand rounds a minute, making escape impossible for the 200,000 remaining residents of a city that only weeks before still had well over half a million inhabitants. *This* is the only game in town, and Hezbollah has no role to speak of in determining its outcome.

Yet, with now-familiar morbid panache, Hezbollah has again succeeded brilliantly in upstaging Lebanon's epic tragedy

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LETTERS.

DON'T BURY MY HEART

San Francisco

Alice Walker's article "What Can the White Man Say to the Black Woman?" [May 22] is as powerful as her other work. However, I wonder what Wilma Mankiller, principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, would think of having Cherokee children listed as "gone." I am sure that her responsibilities include the protection and education of living Cherokee children.

I have often visited the Pine Ridge Lakota Reservation in South Dakota. I have seen swarms of Lakota children there—also listed by Walker as "gone." Those children were at their schools, on playgrounds, attending powwows, sun dances, feasts, ceremonies, Wounded Knee memorials, etc. Lakota activists, tribal councils, parents, teachers, health and social workers would be shocked to hear that anyone would consider the children as "gone." *Kay Cole*

IN MY TRIBE

On the road in Kentucky

Alice Walker's perspective on history reminds all of us of the forgotten lives of thousands who died not because of crimes but because we were of a different race from the Whiteman.

During my imprisonment in South Dakota, Alice sent me her award-winning book *The Color Purple*. I passed it around to other inmates, and when I left prison eighteen months later the book was torn and ragged, yet many were still in line to read it.

I later met Alice Walker and thanked her for her gift. She since has become a very close friend of Indian people and of the many tribal nations she mentioned. Wherever you are, Alice, those children, men and women are still struggling to survive. Your words and work will insure that we will never be extinct. *Dennis Banks*

RIP VAN WALKER

Palisades, N.Y.

How dare you allow an illiterate, welfare-cheating, drug-addicted whore to tell me what I can or can't say to whom? Oh, Alice Walker *isn't* any of those things? Well, *some* black women are. If she can call me a genocidal, slave-raping, world-polluting, apple-poisoning drug dealer, am I not entitled to respond in kind?

Doesn't *The Nation* owe an apology to Theodore Bilbo, James Watt, Meir Kahane and all the other overt racists it has condemned over the years? Or is racism fine only for a black person? Or only for a black woman? Please clarify. Yes, yes, I understand that Walker uses "the white man" as a rhetorical device. But it is the same one as, "Don't you sass me, nigger!"

Is it completely beside the point to wonder whether Walker believes that "the white man" was either the first or the last slave buyer in Africa? That "the white man" turned the Sahara into a desert? That Idi Amin, Pol Pot, Sukarno, the Red Guards and the governments of Ethiopia and Burundi have all been "white men"?

I would also be interested to learn whether the editors of *The Nation* share Walker's Rip Van Winkle–like belief that "the black woman is still forced to provide cheap labor, in the form of children, for the factories and assembly lines of the white man." No, I retract the reference to Rip, who slept for only twenty years. It is more than forty years since American factory labor could be referred to as cheap, and more than thirty since American factories stopped craving black labor. The latter development, coinciding with the (truly) forced exodus of black sharecroppers and tenant farmers from the South, has very much to do with the devastating rate of unemployment among black male youth since about 1954, which has very much to do with most of the social conditions that stir Walker's passionate agony.

White man though I am, I share most of Walker's goals. I do not share her belief that racist rhetoric and wild disregard for facts will get us where we want to go.

Andrew E. Norman

WALKER REPLIES

San Francisco

Dear Kay Cole: "Gone" does not necessarily mean extinct.

Obviously, the Indian children you see when you visit the Lakota reservation are not "gone," though that you see them in "swarms" is unfortunate. But where are the children of Wounded Knee? Of the Trail of Tears? Of all those unmarked massacres of Indian women, men and children across the land? In other words, where are the child ancestors of the children you see?

Obviously, black people still exist in America. We and our children are not "gone" either. But what of the *African* children—Mandinkas, Fulanis, Ibos, Yorubas—who died in the slave ships and on the plantations?

If all these tribal African and Indian children of the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries are not "gone," victims of the slave trade and Indian "removal," then I implore you to present them.

I know and respect your work for Native Americans, and I understand your need (and theirs) to affirm the present existence of Indians in a land that continually tries to hide them away in the past. But it is precisely these children—victims of colonial "expansion," "civilization" and white "settlers," who *are* hidden; unless we refuse to let them be. In listing my great-grandmother's tribe, the Cherokee, I was mourning my own lost child ancestors, who *are* "gone," whether the Cherokee Nation exists today or not. I may be wrong, but I expect Wilma Mankiller would understand this.

But why, I must ask, do you make no attempt to encompass the whole of my statement in your thoughts, and in your response to it?

My statement "The Right To Life: What Can the White Man Say to the Black Woman?" (its full, original title) challenges the arrogance of an overwhelmingly white and male, well-to-do Supreme Court that would consider upholding laws that would return all women to the days and dangers of illegal abortion, a burden that will be particularly heavy on those women least able to bear it, because of poverty and ill health: black and poor women. The statement specifically addresses white male "right-to-lifers," most of whom have probably never touched a black or Indian child, not to mention cared for one. (We must, if abortion becomes illegal again, insist that all of these men found orphanages or build very roomy houses.)

My point is not that every Cherokee, Lakota or African-American child is "gone" but that white men (as they have traditionally identified themselves to peoples of color, to the extent of frequently codifying this self-identification in their not-infrequently racist laws) have never, with only the rarest exceptions, shown concern about protecting them before. Why now?

In my opinion, the embryo that white males want to protect, and will often feed, house and clothe after its birth, is white and male. This being the case, they should not attempt to force black women to suffer the births of children they cannot afford. They should not attempt to force black or white women to bear children they do not want.

If the white, male, well-to-do President of the United States cared about the lives of poor women, and of women and children of color, there would be poor women and black women and Indian women on the Supreme Court. Until the Court reflects more accurately the true economic, sexual and racial complexion of this country, it, and not abortion, should be considered illegal.

Alice Walker

MEDIA MONOPOLISTS

Kinshasa, Zaire

The points made in Ben Bagdikian's informative essay on the increasing trend toward interlocking multimedia communications networks ["The Lords of the Global Village," June 12] should be of concern to every free-thinking individual. But noticeably ab-

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EDITORIALS.

Termination Time

The agreement reached in Tela, Honduras, by the presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to have the *contras* disbanded by December was a major victory for the people and government of Nicaragua. Almost as significant as the agreement itself was the fact that it was reached over the strenuous objections of the Bush Administration and conservatives in Congress. The Tela agreement has the potential to allow Nicaragua to climb out of the abyss created by eight years of Ronald Reagan, *contra* terrorism and a full-scale, U.S.-imposed economic war. But whether it comes in time to prevent Nicaragua's return to the prewar, U.S.-dominated status quo remains to be seen.

The near future does not look bright for Nicaragua. The *contra* leadership has vowed to ignore the Tela agreement and to continue its war, supported by $4.5 million a month in "nonlethal" U.S. aid. The U.S.-orchestrated campaign of economic sabotage continues unabated, led by a trade embargo and, more important, the veto of international bank loans to Nicaragua.

The Bush Administration, with all-too-willing accomplices in Congress, is also engaged in a massive effort to subvert, buy or, at the very least, discredit Nicaragua's up-

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coming presidential, legislative and municipal elections, scheduled for February 25. The National Endowment for Democracy has already appropriated $3.5 million to help organize, train and direct certain opposition candidates and parties. That's $2.33 for every Nicaraguan of voting age. In Nicaragua's crippled economy it's the equivalent of more than $100 for each potential vote, and many in Congress, including some Democrats, hope to provide even more money before the elections are held.

Additionally, untold millions in covert C.I.A. money is being used to direct the opposition and discredit the Sandinista Party. And finally, despite specific promises to Congress last spring from President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker 3d that the *contras* would cease their military activities, they continue to attack homes, farms and cooperatives in Nicaragua—killing, kidnapping or terrorizing anyone they think might be affiliated with or sympathetic to the Sandinista Party.

This situation creates some very clear and specific objectives for the hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens who have worked for years to stop the *contra* war and change U.S. policy toward Nicaragua and the rest of Central America. First, a major campaign must be undertaken to stop the U.S. government's attempts to subvert or influence Nicaragua's elections. If, after all the interference already perpetrated, the Sandinistas can still win an election, they deserve a chance to govern their country in peace.

Second, before the elections are held grass-roots organizations must persuade members of Congress to agree to accept the determination of the United Nations and the Organization of American States regarding their fairness. After all the overheated politics in Washington on this issue, no Congressional observer group—however "bipartisan"—can be an objective monitor.

Third, Congress must accept the will of the Central American presidents and stop funding the *contras*. This support can be cut in November by one or all of the four Congressional committees appointed to monitor the $49 million "nonlethal" aid package approved in last spring's "bipartisan accord."

Finally, the United States must accept responsibility for its role in undermining the Nicaraguan economy. In 1986 the World Court found the United States guilty of violating international law in sponsoring a war against Nicaragua and ordered it to pay $3 billion in damages to help rebuild the country. To date, both the Reagan and Bush Administrations, as well as Congress, have ignored this ruling.

The Tela accord and its plan for demobilizing the *contras* represents a clear victory for the grass-roots movement to change U.S. foreign policy. But the Reagan-inspired goal of overthrowing the Nicaraguan government has changed only in means. Anti-intervention groups must keep pressure on Congress to deny the Bush-Quayle team a free hand. Otherwise, the Administration may yet be able to buy at the polls what they couldn't steal in the countryside.

STRAWS IN THE WIND

The Supreme Court plurality had its say in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, and now the country's pro-choice majority is being heard in a variety of forums. *Item:* Tricia Hunter, the only pro-choice Republican in a field of six, won a special primary to fill a vacant California Assembly seat. Abortion rights groups threw their support behind Hunter in a heavily Republican district. *Item:* In August the House of Representatives refused to renew harsh restrictions on the District of Columbia's use of tax money to pay for abortions for poor women. Last year the restrictions were approved by a margin of 222 to 186; this year it was 219 to 206 against. *Item:* In the past six months, the National Abortion Rights Action League has registered a 75 percent increase in membership. The National Organization for Women has added 50,000 members since its Washington march, and Planned Parenthood 85,000 this year, compared with 55,000 in all of 1988.

Vienna Waltz

State Department official Felix Bloch, accused of spying for the Soviet Union, has vanished from the front pages and television screens like the elusive Harry Lime in the Carol Reed–Graham Greene film *The Third Man*.

For all we know, Bloch may turn out to be the central figure in a real-life spy scandal that will rock the Foreign Service. Then again, for all we know at this point, he could be just another frustrated bureaucrat with the saving virtue that he didn't get along with Ron Lauder. For all we know from reading the papers—is that nobody knows much of anything. All the F.B.I. knew was that it didn't know enough about Bloch's dealings to make an espionage prosecution stick. That briefcase he was allegedly videotaped passing to an alleged K.G.B. agent could have—for all the F.B.I. knew—contained copies of *Playboy*. Or he could have been working, off the books, as a freelance consultant on business conditions in Europe.

Knowing they didn't know enough to prosecute, the Feds tried to pressure Bloch into confessing by going public with the story and sicking the press on him. Thus, the media carnival of hordes of reporters tailing agents tailing the suspect in sinister Chappaqua, New York, the Vienna of suburbia.

So what else do we know? Well, we know that the videotape *ABC News* ran showing Bloch passing the briefcase to his contact was a simulation. Or rather, we knew it after anchor Peter Jennings apologized for not labeling it as such, "as clearly or as quickly as we should have." Jennings blamed a "production error." But here's what the reporter actually said on camera, as shown by a transcript of the broadcast:

> It was not until earlier this year that Bloch was videotaped handing over a briefcase to a known Soviet agent on the streets of a European capital. (SIMULATION) *That*

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videotape plus other pieces of evidence led the FBI to pick up Bloch when he returned to the United States about two months ago. [Emphasis added.]

What else do we know? According to *The New York Times*, "somehow the information [that Bloch was under suspicion] was disclosed." To whom was left undisclosed by *The Times*, which added that "American counterintelligence eavesdropping picked up a Soviet agent warning Mr. Bloch, 'A bad virus is going around and we believe you are now infected.'"

The language has a certain ring of authenticity. At least we can imagine John le Carré or some other writer of spy thrillers using it. But unless definite information comes to light that Bloch did not call in sick the next day, one might conclude that he had a real virus. There's a lot of that going around.

On the basis of such slender facts, the press jumped into the story feet first and spent the next week or so floundering around, reporting on itself reporting on Bloch, passing along cryptic rumors and letting itself be used by the F.B.I. Once again the press has swallowed a government handout and made it front-page news. Sure, it seemed like a great story at the time, complete with that picturesque setting in Vienna, capital city of East-West intrigue. But the only hard story was that the F.B.I. had an American diplomat under surveillance as an espionage suspect.

So the press comes out of the affair looking a bit like the Joseph Cotten character in *The Third Man*—the American writer of cowboy stories, an innocent caught up in a devious game. To be sure, as Orson Welles, playing Harry Lime, points out, Vienna is a more exciting place than Switzerland, which in five centuries of peaceful neutrality has given the world only the cuckoo clock. On the other hand, Swiss cuckoo clocks may be dull but they are certainly more reliable than the black-market penicillin Harry was peddling. As in the movie, reporters searched dark streets for Harry Lime, only to see a menacing shadow materialize into a little man who says, "Mein Herr, Balloonen?"

Flag-Saving

That President George Bush and members of Congress would denounce the Supreme Court for deciding that flag-burning is a protected exercise of the right to free speech (in *Texas v. Johnson*) was predictable. Less predictable were attempts by otherwise liberal constitutional scholars to appease the superpatriots by offering solutions that would seriously dilute accepted First Amendment principles.

A salient fact about this case—and one that most of the press seems to have missed—is that the Supreme Court's ruling simply affirmed a decision of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. The Texas court does not include any card-carrying members of the American Civil Liberties Union, which makes even more impressive its opinion recognizing "that the right to differ is the centerpiece of our First Amendment freedoms." (Perhaps we would have been saved all the melodrama if the press had pointed out that the Supreme Court opinion came down in favor of States' rights.)

Despite the example set by the Texas court's language, both Professor Laurence Tribe of Harvard Law School and Professor Burt Neuborne of New York University School of Law (who is also a former legal director of the A.C.L.U.) have on this issue departed from strict civil libertarian principles, Tribe more than Neuborne. Tribe's solution to the outcry against the opinion would be to make it a crime to burn the flag under any circumstance. Though this might get around First Amendment objections to a statute that prohibits destruction of the flag only when done for political purposes, it also proscribes one form of effective political expression.

If one is politically engaged, one wants to be able to make political statements with the most powerful tools available. The flag is such a tool, and protesters should be able to express disagreement with the policies it represents by burning or otherwise destroying it, as well as by voting, marching, speaking and writing. Totemization of the flag is inconsistent with the concept of the First Amendment. There is no good constitutional justification for excluding the flag from the available arsenal of political speech, as Professor Tribe proposes.

Neuborne does not go nearly as far, but he takes a position that is at odds with good First Amendment doctrine. After first assuring readers of his letter to *The New York Times* that no goldarn flag-burner would ever dine at his table, he proposed that flag-burning in a political context should be made criminal when it threatens to provoke violence against the protester. *The Times* endorsed that position in an editorial the day it published Neuborne's letter. But that too is a misguided position.

If expressive conduct is protected by the First Amendment, the state has an absolute duty to protect protesters from any illegal conduct directed against them that might be provoked by their protest. To allow opponents to convert otherwise protected activity into a crime inverts the accepted constitutional principle, which is that speech can be punished when it threatens to incite an audience to take immediate illegal action advocated by the speaker. That is an entirely different kettle of fish from an audience being incited to attack a speaker because it disagrees with his or her speech. As Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "Every idea is an incitement." If voicing an idea, by actual or symbolic speech, can be made illegal because someone in response threatens to harm the speaker, then no idea will be safe. Everything makes someone angry. Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* made Ayatollah Ruhollah Kho-

AWARD TO THE NATION

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meini *very* angry. The idea that speech that might provoke an illegal response should be punished is a dangerous dilution of the First Amendment, as the Rushdie affair teaches us all too dramatically.

Another strong argument in favor of the flag-burning opinion is that Justices Antonin Scalia and Anthony Kennedy—both ultraconservative Reagan appointees—were two of the five Justices in the majority. That these two should join the Court's liberals in upholding the decision shows the power of the idea of the First Amendment. Justice Kennedy, in a short apologia, said, "Sometimes we must make decisions we do not like. We make them because they are right, right in the sense that the law and the Constitution, as we see them, compel the result." It is disappointing that liberals like Tribe and Neuborne would take any position other than absolute support of the majority in the flag-burning case. If burning the flag is done to make a political statement, as it was in the Texas case, it must be protected without qualification.

MELVIN L. WULF

Melvin L. Wulf practices law in New York City. He was legal director of the A.C.L.U. from 1962 to 1977.

UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

You've got to say this about the English: Those people are polite. Whenever I go back to England, I'm reminded again of how polite they are, and I feel terrible about having forgotten it since the previous trip. So I say, "Sorry," to the first Englishman I meet. He always says, "Sorry," back. You can't out-sorry an Englishman. That's another thing I tend to forget between visits: Those people are stubborn.

The English are so polite that they thank you when they give you something. If a waiter in a cafe brings you a cup of tea, he says, "Thank you," when he puts it down in front of you. I know that this irritates some Americans. They were hoping to say thank you themselves—they don't want to give the impression that Americans are a bunch of oafs—but, often before they've even realized that the waiter is approaching, he slides the tea in front of them, says it and slips away while they're wondering how to thank someone who has just thanked them. Then they sit there speechless in front of their tea, certain that the waiter is telling the cook, "Those Yanks don't know tuppence about manners."

My old Army buddy Charlie has a system for fighting what he calls the sneak-attack thank you. When the waiter puts the cup of tea in front of Charlie and says, "Thank you," Charlie says, "You're welcome. Think nothing of it. Glad to help out. Call on me anytime. Anytime you need someone to sit here while you put a cup of tea down in front of him, just give me a ring. Here, let me give you my phone number. That area code there—201—is Nutley, New Jersey." Charlie says that the system is remarkably effective. When the waiter brings the check, he often doesn't say thank you as he puts it down in front of Charlie. In fact, the waiter sometimes seems so intent on giving Charlie a wide berth that he doesn't bring the check at all.

I never get irritated at English politeness myself. I appreciate it. I always feel like saying thank you for it, except that someone has just said thank you to me and I don't want to start any trouble. While I was in an English train station this summer, for instance, I heard someone on the public address system announcing a train's delay in such a polite way that I murmured, "Thanks, awfully," before I realized that he was talking about my train.

Of course, the simple act of announcing that a train will be late can strike an American as an extraordinary act of courtesy. Around the United States these days, here's how passengers learn that their train's been delayed: It doesn't arrive. They mill around on the platform, muttering and cursing, until they can grab some railroad employee who wanders by and demand to know what happened to the train. He says, "Beats me, buddy."

The English station announcer was not simply announcing the delay; he was apologizing for it. "British Rail regrets to announce the delay of the 4:06 to Taunton," I heard him say, as I was wandering through the newsstand. "We're terribly sorry for any inconvenience caused to passengers because of this delay."

"No problem," I said, as I poked around on the magazine rack for an American news magazine that might inform me of some American atrocity I could apologize to my English friends for. "No problem at all."

The newsstand was noisy, and there was some static in the public address system. But as I reached for a newspaper I thought I heard the announcer say, "I can't tell you how awful I feel about the inconvenience we've caused. I feel absolutely beastly about this. I know many of you have important appointments, or want to return to loved ones who—"

"Don't worry about it, really," I said, although I realized as I said it that some of the other customers were looking at me oddly, the way English waiters sometimes look at my Army buddy Charlie. "Actually, we're in no particular hurry."

"I'm frightfully sorry," the announcer seemed to be saying. He sounded as if he might cry.

I dropped my newspaper and rushed over to the information booth, where I could see the announcer speaking into a microphone. "Look," I said, "I'm going to have time on my hands in Taunton as it is, so it's no inconvenience. And I want to thank you for being so concerned."

"No, thank you for being so understanding," he said.

"Thank you," I said, starting to go back to the newsstand.

"Thank you," he said.

You can't out-thank-you an Englishman. Those people are stubborn.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

In a celebrated address to the Cuban writers' union just after the revolution, Fidel Castro claimed that his policy on the freedom of conscience and creativity was ample, generous, distinctive—and limited. "Within the revolution—everything," he said. "Outside the revolution—nothing." Over the years, this contradiction resolved itself, as it had to, into the even simpler proposition that Castro would decide what was and was not "within the revolution." The denuding of Havana's publishing houses, the flight of authors like Padilla, the decline of once-stimulating papers like *Revolución* and the sporadic heresy hunts against artistic dissent (often unpleasantly disguised as a campaign against homosexuality) all followed as a more or less mathematical certainty from this original misconception or fallacy.

There have been some on the left—not as many as the neoconservative demagogues suggest, but still a number—who have explained, if not exactly justified, this line. Their reasoning was not, as is often said too easily, of the classic Stalinist kind, because it was couched in tones that made allowances for the underdog rather than excuses or even paeans for the superpower. Cuba, ran the argument, was a small country that had repeatedly been invaded and despoiled by the United States (true). It had undergone an authentic popular revolution (true). As a direct result, it had been subjected to an unceasing campaign of sabotage and destruction, including the hiring of Mafia agents by American Presidents for the purpose of political murder (true). Therefore, it was entitled to impose censorship as a matter of wartime exigency, just as any capitalist country would do in similar circumstances. (The argument usually elided the historical attitude of the left toward wartime or "national security" censorship in capitalist nations.)

I wonder what those who have flirted with this logic will make of a decision reported in *Granma*, organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, on August 4. Portentously headlined "An Unavoidable Decision, Consistent With Our Principles," it announced a ban on the circulation of two foreign publications, both of which are indicted for "justifying bourgeois democracy as the highest form of popular participation" and flaunting "a fascination with the American way of life." The names of the two foreign publications are *Moscow News* and *Sputnik*.

When Karl Marx was an editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* he published some energetic essays on the stupidity of censorship, stressing the sniveling furtiveness of the censor and lampooning the idea that such a cretinous practice should be employed against the circulation of ideas. (It used to be the fashion of Parisian Stalinists to say that this was just the immature, "humanist" Marx; but I notice that this faction has lately been taking the opportunity to shut up voluntarily.) The Cuban comrades have now set out, paradoxically, to vindicate the young Marx. Cuba, they say in their statement, "is fighting for socialism and communism, and therefore publications like these do not correspond with our reality or interests and are not for us." In other words, we are menaced by Yankee imperialism on all sides; the revolution must be vigilant; therefore we forbid the publications of the Muscovite intelligentsia. Say what you will about this non sequitur, you are bound to admit that it is world-historical.

When I was last in Cuba, during the Havana film festival of 1987, the consensus among the braver souls in the writers' union was that things were improving. The cultural commissar atmosphere, so calamitous in the 1970s, was being dispelled. Everybody, not just the relatively privileged element with access to foreigners (if you call that privilege, which is itself an interesting question), mentioned the significance of *Moscow News*. Long a moldering object in the bales of mediocre Soviet mags that had a shelf life of close to infinity, this had become the pick of the hundred flowers. Now, those in Havana who are curious about the great developments in the Soviet Union and beyond have been told, in one clumsy, casual edict, that it is none of their business. What an insult! Much graver, I would say, than the supposed offense often cited by Castroites, to the effect that "outside" critics should not "impose" their values on the Cubans.

I can anticipate one possible defense of the censorship. Since 1968, when Castro (I don't call him Fidel, as some people do, because I don't know the guy) supported the occupation of Czechoslovakia, Cuban partisans have resented the charge that their country is a Soviet stooge. Well, here's a fine disproof of that slander: Soviet papers can be banned as well as any other kind. Cuba takes orders from nobody! In the thoughtful silence that follows this pronouncement, who knows what uncontrolled ripostes may be forming.

Actually, despite its sorry endorsement of the Brezhnev doctrine, Cuba very often did pursue a course independent of the Soviet Union. In the cases of Angola and Nicaragua it did so quite honorably, in my opinion, and in the case of Ethiopia very much less so. That can be debated. But the key soldier in all three campaigns was Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez, and if one year ago you had dared suggest that he was a drug cartel collaborator of Oliver North proportions you would, if you were a Cuban living in Cuba, possibly have been shot. Possibly on Ochoa's orders. Today, if you affirmed the contrary and said that Ochoa was a hero of the revolution, you would be jailed. Censorship is instituted precisely to mask distinctions of this kind, and to make sure that bad news can come only from the same source as good news, which is from on high. Remember Joseph Cotten in *The Third Man*, who keeps being asked why his hand is bandaged? "A parrot bit me," he says, with increasing exasperation. Living under censorship is like being permanently hectored by a parrot and occasionally savaged by it. Be ready to denounce tomorrow what we made you affirm yesterday.

Spare me the letters that remind us all that Cuba has a good health care system and has abolished illiteracy. A healthy, literate people do not need to be told what they can read—least of all by those who once obliged them to read and revere the very output that is now forbidden.

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Merchants of the Magi-Mart

> "Allow me," said Mr. Gall: "I distinguish the picturesque and the beautiful, and I add to them, in the laying out of grounds, a third and distinct character, which I call *unexpectedness.*"
>
> "Pray, sir," said Mr. Milestone, "by what name do you distinguish this character, when a person walks round the grounds for the second time?"
>
> —Thomas Love Peacock, *Headlong Hall*

Back in the 1950s, when I was first learning to read newspapers and understand their inner laws of motion, I used to be charmed by the unexpectedness of having some palpable rogue presented as democracy's latest doughty champion. No villain—Syngman Rhee, Magsaysay, Ngo Dinh Diem—was too freighted with corruption or imbecility but that Luce's hacks would heave him up on the white charger and send him shambling into battle. Nothing much has changed in the intervening thirty-five years. As the world leaders congenial to Washington and Wall Street make their seasonal swings through town to stroke senators, bankers and editorial boards, the hacks do their duty with so ingenuous an air that one could almost swear that they were learning the arts of misrepresentation for the very first time, or had so successfully internalized the necessary stylistic procedures that they were not consciously aware of the extent to which they were deceiving their readers. Of course, it is the desideratum of almost all foreign news desks of the corporate press that their correspondents may be ignorant, so long as they are ignorant in a reliable way.

Take the impending visit to this country, scheduled for September 3, of Fernando Collor de Mello. Polls suggest that Collor is leading by a substantial margin in the Brazilian presidential campaign, which culminates in November. As one would expect, given that Brazil has the largest economy in Latin America, its elections are always followed with keen interest by the disposing classes here. This particular election is the first conventionally democratic one since the generals took over in 1964 with the enthusiastic support of the United States. A few months ago there was a certain tension in the air. It seemed possible that the next president would be Leonel Brizola, a populist and the brother-in-law of João Goulart, the president evicted in 1964. Worse still, Luis Inacio da Silva, "Lula," the candidate of the Workers Party, was making a strong showing, and if Brizola was regarded as being mostly gestural in his radicalism, Lula was cut from tougher material. Of all Third World nations, Brazil is the most indebted—$112 billion—to First World banks, and Lula was given to denunciations of the debt burden with an eloquence troubling to bankers, who look at debt the same way a dog looks at a ham bone.

When Lula came north in May, the bigwigs scarcely pulled out the bunting. Just before he arrived *The New York Times* ran a piece by James Brooke, its new correspondent in Rio de Janeiro, saying that Lula had a healthy respect for capitalism. Brooke's piece was mostly of interest in showing that in place of Marlise Simons, a good reporter who knows a lot about Brazil, *The Times* had imported another of its standard-issue foreign correspondents eager to demonstrate that nation after nation was turning to Milton Friedman and von Hayek.

Unlike Lula, Collor is to get the big hello when he arrives. According to the *Jornal do Brasil*, he will be greeted by Bush or Quayle. Meetings are expected with Treasury Secretary Brady and with the heads of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Collor will lunch in Congress with Democratic and Republican leaders. All of which intimates that something friendly this way comes. And indeed, Collor has already announced that he won't try to buck the wise counsel of the I.M.F., such counsel being the expected recipes of austerity, sale of state assets, lowered domestic consumption, increased exports and an opening of the economy to increased foreign exploitation. The *Folha de São Paulo*, one of Brazil's leading newspapers, ran a story for August 6 on Collor that began, "The electoral polls that point to a large advantage for Fernando Collor de Mello are leaving Brazil's creditor banks satisfied and tranquil."

Hot Over Collor

On July 30 *The New York Times* introduced the man whom the Brazilian press is calling the U.S. government's preferred candidate. In the Week in Review section a large photograph depicted a smooth-looking fellow shaking hands with Margaret Thatcher. Any perturbed banker not sufficiently assuaged by this comforting image would have had further doubts dispelled by Brooke's accompanying dispatch. Here, shoulder to shoulder with President Salinas de Gortari and candidate Mario Vargas Llosa, the prophets of free enterprise in Mexico and Peru, respectively, was Collor advocating the selling of state companies and the cutting of public payrolls. The article's headline was "Desperate, Latin Nations Discover the Free Market."

Brooke and his colleagues would certainly be remiss if they did not point out that the manic promotion of "free-market capitalism," as presented in the idiom dreamed up by the intellectual publicists for Reagan and Thatcher in the late 1970s, is inflating Latin American political rhetoric just at the moment that it is starting to recede farther north. The trouble comes when Brooke, Bernstein, Shirley Christian and the other choristers of Capitalism Resurgent distort their reporting, both in advertising the supposed successes of the "market" model—something Christian has done on frequent occasions in writing about Chile—and in concealing the horrors of actually-existing capitalism throughout the Third World. This penchant for distortion and omission is habitual, as mainstream reporting on Collor demonstrates.

On July 31 Brooke had another piece in *The Times*, setting forth Collor as a kind of all-purpose "Our Boy," as though Fredy Cristiani, Vargas Llosa, Jimmy Carter and Al Gore were rolled into one. Here was a candidate "who grew up listening to the Rolling Stones," who with his "actor's smile, aquiline nose and swimmer's build . . . seems to have stepped out of one of Brazil's slickly produced television

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dramas." Collor, who was educated in Rio's "best private schools," is a former national karate champion and now, running on an anticorruption ticket, presents himself as "Mr. Clean," the "hunter of maharajahs," those civil servants who do little work but pick up fat checks.

In the fortieth paragraph of a forty-five paragraph story Brooke briefly noted charges of corruption made against Collor. Brazilian congressmen "allied with Mr. Brizola," Brooke was careful to point out, had presented the Justice Minister with a document detailing twelve such charges. Brooke gave no details. His final paragraph depicted Collor, who dismisses the charges, sitting confidently at home, having refused to participate in two televised debates. "At the hour of the first debate, he invited photographers to his family mansion in Brasília. The candidate and his wife were photographed watching on television *Secret Admirer*, an American teen-love movie dubbed in Portuguese. 'The film's great,' said Rosane Collor, holding Vine, her white poodle. 'See, I'm not even taping the debate,' the candidate said, pointing to a videocassette recorder." Connoisseurs of this kind of journalism might care to compare this intimate fade-out with Lindsay Gruson's payoff in his crucial puff piece on Cristiani two days after the Salvadoran election, which concluded with an admiring quotation about Cristiani's wristy technique in playing squash.

Say It With Flowers

Some in the Brazilian press are painting a rather different picture of Collor's political biography. The first five of the following charges were all publicized before Brooke's dispatches of July 30 and 31. Yet Brooke decided to spare *Times* readers these charges, reckoning, so he tells my colleague Rich McKerrow, that they had not yet "drawn blood . . . such that his political image is damaged." Newspapers and television broadcasters often do this. They tell you by the hour about candidate X's "carefully sculpted image," sometimes with an admiring sidebar on the media wizard confecting this hype. They'll even add that "so far nothing has dented this polished facade," even though abundant material for any facade-fouler is ready to hand. This was particularly true of Jimmy Carter during the primaries in 1976.

According to the Brazilian press, when Collor was governor of the state of Alagoas, a court ruled that a sales tax previously imposed on the sugar barons was illegal and should be refunded. Collor then agreed to give the barons—the major financial powers in the state—more than $100 million, a sum that a court later ruled to be two times larger than it should have been. Such kindness seems regularly to have imbued Collor. As governor he handed a state contract worth $500,000 to a company headed by his principal economic adviser, Zelia Cardoso de Mello (no relation), bypassing the usual bidding process as he did so.

Hunting maharajas is to Collor's national political trajectory what zero-based budgeting was to the former peanut dealer mentioned above. Yet in 1982, as mayor of Maceió, the capital city of Alagoas, Collor appointed 3,000 public employees—3,000 of these same maharajas, that is—in the final week of his tenure in City Hall. Such beneficence was reflected on a smaller scale when he was governor. Sixty-five people put to work in the legislative assembly of Alagoas turned out to be either his relatives, his wife's relatives or relatives of his political allies. This is payroll padding on a scale that would make even a Tammany politician blush.

As mentioned in Brooke's piece, Collor's family—like that of his possible host, Quayle—is a media barony, owning a newspaper, a television station and radio stations. Not in Brooke's piece was *Folha de São Paulo*'s disclosure that when Organizações Arnon de Mello, the name of the Collor media group, owed the state bank a bundle of money, the group agreed to repay it by giving the bank free television, radio and newspaper advertising. For the bank the deal was signed by a man who was one of Collor's principal supporters in his campaign for governor. Here is a fine example of actually-existing privatization of public property.

Further charges appeared in the Brazilian press after Brooke's two articles ran. In his last five months as governor of Alagoas, Collor spent almost $1 million on official propaganda promoting his work as governor, of which 54 percent went to media outlets owned by him and his family.

Brazilian law decrees that state governors have the right to "expenses of a secret character," which don't have to be formally accounted for in any great detail. These sums are traditionally meant for emergency expenses for which receipts cannot be secured. From January to May of this year Collor spent $1.1 million in this way, thus exceeding by no less than 5,276 percent the budget put aside for "expenses of a secret character." The year before, Collor similarly had gone over budget, by 1,719 percent. According to *Folha de São Paulo*, which disclosed this, Collor could have used the money he spent this year to build 200 low-cost homes or pay the year's salaries of the employees of the state agency looking after abandoned children. Instead, Collor spent much of the money on presents of flowers, crystal and silver for friends and party members. Within the past year this privateering foe of bloated public expenditure has spent more than $10,000 in state funds on flowers purchased from a company owned by his wife's cousin—all this in one of the poorest states in Brazil, where malnutrition is endemic.

Does it matter that North American readers are denied details of Governor Collor's florist's bill, or are not told that he is a corrupt scoundrel who has been taught a few tricks of the P.R. man's trade? Of course it does. First, the more burnished Collor's image is in the United States, the more this helps him in Brazil, where he can talk about his "credibility" up north with people who count. Second, the distortions perpetuate a mythic world where clean-limbed young governors slay the dragons of corrupt "old-style" Latin politics and bind their nations' wounds with homilies from Friedman and Gilder. Next thing you know, they are talking about the victory of capitalism, which is certainly occurring in Latin America, but not quite in the way claimed by Brooke, Christian and similar merchants of the Magi-Mart.

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ARTICLES.

THE WORLD IN THE 1980S

Notes on the New Political Culture

FRED HALLIDAY

Superpower rivalry does not take place in a vacuum; rather, it reflects and influences a wider political culture. From a unique global perspective Fred Halliday provides a telephoto shot of some of the significant trends in the political weather on planet earth during the past decade. —The Editors

The 1980s were a period of signal deterioration in international relations, of cold war between the great powers, internationalized unemployment in the developed capitalist world and immiseration in the South, as well as, at a more ideological level, of resurrected, designer Social Darwinism masquerading as enterprise and freedom. The cultural climate in the developed world has been marked by mass narcissism and historical amnesia. This has nowhere been clearer than in the belief that we are living in a world of one ever-freer modern and universal political culture, with an increasingly and beneficially unified political system. Under the pretext of providing a more realistic and up-to-date culture, this ideology suppresses and rejects alternatives, especially those of a critical or radical nature. If there are reasons for accepting that the world has become more integrated during these years—trends in communications, economics and the management of global problems providing some evidence of this—there are also powerful reasons for recognizing the inequities within this unification, and the contrary, fragmentary processes. During the decade the gap between the world's richer and poorer countries has widened, a divide that in strictly economic terms has been compounded by the new methods that advanced capitalism has developed to enhance itself, never short of innovation at someone else's expense. These include the internationalization of sex tourism, the dumping of toxic waste in the Third World and the destruction, for Northern use, of vast areas of the South's ecology.

Within the developed capitalist economies themselves, there has been much talk of breaking down economic barriers and of economic integration. The point is not that such a process is an illusion but that it is taking place through a growing concentration of power, an epidemic of monopsony that is focusing power in fewer and fewer hands. Moreover, if this internationalization and mobility is true of some of the factors of production, mainly capital and technology, it must be starkly contrasted with the increasing immobility of another "factor," namely, labor. The advanced economies, which for centuries and without invitation occupied and plundered the Third World, have in their postimperial rectitude seen fit to make South-North labor flows as difficult as possible: Freedom of movement for some contrasts with constriction for others. The alternative in each case, of planned allocation of resources on the basis of internationally determined needs, is thereby excluded. If this is obvious in Europe, where the introverted metapatriotic market of 1992 is looming, it is equally evident in the abandonment by the United States of the commitment to provide a refuge for the poor of the world, at a time when U.S. financial markets have become more international than ever before: The Statue of Liberty could, with some justice, be moved to the banks of the Rio Grande. As for Japan—a country that has, as much as any other major capitalist power, visited violence and exploitative interference on its neighbors, through the pillage of China and Korea and, more recently, in the brothelization of much of Southeast Asia—it never permitted immigration in the first place, with the exception of the viciously subjugated community from Korea.

At the level of culture, both in its political and more strictly aesthetic dimensions, there has been an efflorescence of particularisms, many of them of the meanest and most historically blinkered kind. In the developed capitalist countries this has involved the inanities of the mass "heritage" industry, often vaunting the quasi-totalitarian concept of "community"; pervasive racism and chauvinism toward newer immigrant groups; the dypsomaniac excesses and populist thuggery of international sporting occasions; and, in the United States and Japan, religio-nationalist intoxication in various forms (born-again Christianity, Shintoism). The Third World itself has been awash in indigenous conflicts and ideological regressions: from the self-destructive sirens of Islamic fundamentalism, which has done more than any imperialist assault from without to divide the Moslem world, to the growth of Hindu and Buddhist chauvinisms in South Asia and the ugly spread of communalism and ethnic conflicts across much of Asia and Africa, in Lebanon, the Punjab, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Sudan and Burundi.

The "second" socialist world has, of course, fared little better. One of the most commendable aspects of the now-discredited "old thinking" was its stress on internationalism, on fraternity between states of similar outlook, on equality between ethnic groups within nations, and on the imperative, inherited from the better side of the Enlightenment, to adopt a critical and where appropriate corrosive attitude toward the presumptions of one's own national culture and history. The advent of greater openness and pluralism has lifted the sluice gates on a tide of nationalistic frenzy and hatred, both within states (the Soviet Union, China, Rumania, Yugoslavia) and, increasingly, between them. Along with many other commendable if inadequately imple-

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Fred Halliday is the author of Iran: Dictatorship and Development *(Penguin), among other books. This article is the introduction to* From Kabul to Managua: Soviet-American Relations in the 1980s, *which Pantheon will publish later this month.*

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mented aspects of the modernizing program represented by traditional Communist parties (exclusion of religion from public and political life, emancipation of women, curbing of private appropriation, planned economic development, solidarity with the Third World), this commitment to internationalist understanding appears threatened in the current rethinking of the socialist model underway in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China, which is in most other respects positive (if belated). The lifting of political controls has revealed that in these countries nothing has "stagnated" more than nationalist myth.

This carnival of division and prejudice, while feeding on factitious history, has been compounded by a denial of real history, of the past causes of present problems and trends. The developed countries have forgotten too easily that for the first half of this century, and before, they attacked or occupied much of the Third World almost at will, enslaving whole peoples, violating national and human rights on a global scale: The justified indignation of the British public at Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's death threat against the writer Salman Rushdie (for vilifying Islam in his novel *The Satanic Verses*) needs to be complemented by awareness of Iranian indignation at the fact that on two occasions in this century Britain, in league with its ally Russia, invaded Iran, and that in the early 1950s Britain conspired with the United States to murder Iranian officials and overthrow the elected government. It is part of the political culture of the 1980s to indulge in disavowal, a kind of postimperial self-righteousness, when such issues are raised: It is evident in American discussion of Vietnam and Central America; in European whitewashing of empire and of its racist culture; in the Japanese euphemization of contentious issues, to a degree that would put even the British ruling class to shame; and, in the case of that class's school textbooks, the outright falsification of history. The militaristic inebriation that gripped Britain during the Falklands war was a fitting expression of this globalized virus, as was the exultation in the United States at the 1986 bombing raids on Libya, in which dozens of civilians were killed. The death of the war criminal Emperor Hirohito this year provided the Japanese, who have temporarily forsworn militarism, with the occasion for indulging their own imperial fantasies. At a time when there is strong public support in the Soviet Union for a memorial to the victims of Stalin's oppression, one can only wonder how long, if ever, it will be before monuments to the victims of colonialism are erected in the capitals that directed it—in Paris, London, Brussels, the Hague, Berlin, Rome, Madrid, Lisbon, Washington, Tokyo.

An essential accompaniment of this solipsistic political culture has been the belief in a new, cosmopolitan "modernity." This ideology, far from being universal, reflects selected values of some of the richer states in the world and presents a range of options that are specific and exclusive. Much that is good in the past is rejected, not least a sense of history itself. Alternative definitions of what modernity might constitute, of the ethical, technical and political options opening up, are removed from discussion. The components of modernity can be organized as much for hierarchy as for democracy—as is most evident in the field of media ownership. At the same time, the spread of information technology, the fetish of the age, involves a further confirmation of the dominance of English at the expense of the other 4,000-odd languages on this earth. In countries like Spain and France, but also in Britain, the cult of modernity is saturated with a reverence for competition and "enterprise," an officially sanctioned greed that has exacerbated the gaps between rich and poor and reintroduced mass beggary onto the streets of Western European capitals on a scale not seen since the 1930s. In addition to flaunting a rejection of caring and compassion at home, the political culture of modernity invokes a turn away from concern with the Third World and with that range of issues—development aid, underdevelopment, solidarity, purposive social transformation—that marked much of the left culture of the 1970s. The most notable exception to this trend was the success of Live Aid, the mobilization to provide aid to Africa set in motion by Bob Geldof in 1985. Yet, despite its enormous humanitarian success, the material result of Live

DRAWINGS BY MARGUERITA BORNSTEIN

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Aid, $70 million raised, was a pittance compared with the decline in real terms of North-South aid transfers and with what developed countries and their corporations were taking from the Third World in various forms, not least debt repayments and declining terms of trade. Similarly, the widespread support for ecological campaigns such as Greenpeace has been able to do little to impede the destruction of the rivers, forests, seas and atmosphere of this planet.

Anti-Third Worldism has become a hallmark of this version of modernism in the modish "realism" of the formerly left-wing intelligentsia in the developed countries. In Europe we find erstwhile supporters of the Vietnamese and Chilean revolutionary movements now singing the praises of the United States and denouncing their former allies, paralleling the recourse to irrationality and archaism in art and literary criticism: admiration for empire and "Christian" values, a reverence for Edward Elgar and John Betjeman. In the United States there is a squalid mood, epitomized by erstwhile New Left writers sneering at their former associates, entranced by Wall Street and retrospectively validating the war in Vietnam. On one issue above all, that of Palestine, where the U.S. government has a central role to play, the majority of the U.S. intelligentsia has adopted a timid conformism, proferring understanding to the Israelis, the dominators who have their own national state, and outrage to the Palestinians, the victims, who do not. More than in any other developed country, this trend has been associated with a penitent embrace of national ideology, a confected Americanism that denies the rich history and radical potential of the country.

This political trend has been strengthened by a diffuse coarsening of cultural attitudes toward the Third World. In regard to the countries of the South as much as toward the poor at home, it has become common to blame the victims for their lack of initiative and enterprise. New role models are now in play. In the United States this degeneration reached its apotheosis in the figure of Rambo, a cataleptic mass murderer inflated into a national hero. In Britain there has been a parallel cultural trend, a resurgence of colonial nostalgia, nowhere more evident than in the insidious recidivism of the nomenclature of Indian restaurants: the Moti Mahal (the Pearl Palace) and the Nur-i Jahan (Light of the World) of two decades ago have become Bengal Bertie's and The Last Days of the Raj. No erotic drama now seems legitimate unless it is set on a plantation or culminates under a punkah. Japanese political leaders, less restrained in expressing racist attitudes, have openly proclaimed the inferiority of other, especially black, peoples. Perhaps, if these processes continue, we can look forward to soap operas about the perpetrators of colonial genocide, to restaurants called Coolies, Petit Colon, Le Pied Noir and Banzai, and to wine bars evoking the ambience of the slave trade—Houseboy, The Middle Passage, or just Chains.

The packaging of modernity and the attendant hostility toward the Third World are an essential backdrop to what might, on its own, appear to be a separate and welcome development, the spate of great-power negotiations on Third World issues. It is tempting, but premature, to argue that these have brought an end to the rivalry between the socialist and capitalist systems, and hence to their rivalry in the Third World. The general impression at the end of the 1980s is that a new era of reconciliation is beginning. The year 1988 was, with considerable justice, hailed as a year in which peace broke out throughout much of the world. The period of negotiation and "new thinking" that has followed Mikhail Gorbachev's emergence raises many hopes; it also contains uncertainties, above all for the Third World.

It was asserted by many, from Gorbachev to Thatcher, that this turn of events marked the end of the cold war. As I have discussed elsewhere, the term "cold war" can mean two different things. In the sense of a period of acute conflict between East and West, involving confrontation and an intensified arms race, then it is certainly the case that the second cold war ended in 1985-87. In the broader sense, that of a rivalry between two contrasting social and political systems, the historical competition that has been the fulcrum of world politics since 1945, the cold war remains very much in force. This is most evident in Afghanistan.

In the late 1980s both the Soviet Union and the United States have argued that they were encouraging compromise in Third World conflicts and a disengagement by external forces—including themselves. Soviet writers talked warmly of there being no losers in regional settlements. In reality, such assurances were not confirmed in the countries concerned. In Afghanistan, the Geneva agreement of April 1988 led to a one-sided implementation: The Russians withdrew

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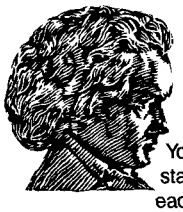

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their forces by February 15, 1989; the West (particularly the United States and Britain) and Pakistan took no notice of the agreement and continued to supply the Islamic counter-revolutionaries with weapons. The result was that when the Soviet forces withdrew a new phase of the Afghan war, an intensified civil war, began: No one in Afghanistan doubted that there was a continuing quest for victory on the part of the guerrillas and their external supporters.

It was an irony indeed that in the middle of February 1989, when the Western world was united in outrage at Islamic fundamentalists' calls for the death of Salman Rushdie, protagonists of that very same fundamentalism should, in the guise of "freedom fighters," be mustering at the gates of Kabul, incited by the whole of the Western world and brandishing missiles supplied by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Few bothered to ask what the Islamic state propounded by these mujahedeen entailed. The supporters of this movement were everywhere—normally deskbound newsmen posturing for the cameras in Swat hats and Pathan shawls, English public school boys entranced by a John Buchanesque world without females, American adventurers and veterans of Indochina eager to wreak vengeance on the Soviet Union and perhaps also captivated by the Afghan practice of mutilating the corpses of victims, as G.I.s did in Vietnam. If Western implementation of the U.N. agreement on Afghanistan was anything to go by, there was to be no truce, and no common ground, in the conflicts of the Third World.

The role of the Western European states in this process was on the whole collusive. It was part of the success of the new, less provocative, U.S. interventionism and of the turn away from serious concern with the Third World that on some issues U.S. policy was received so indulgently in Europe. It was noteworthy, for example, that the social democratic parties of Western Europe, when in power, did little of substance to help Nicaragua resist U.S. pressure: François Mitterrand and Felipe González soon trimmed to the etiquette of the Atlantic club. The U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983 occasioned some criticism from Britain, but this, in part motivated by concern with the properties of the Commonwealth, soon passed. In fact, there had been considerable collaboration in Third World covert action and pro-insurgency policy between the United States and its European allies: between the United States and France against Libya in Chad, between Holland and the United States in organizing revolt in Surinam, between the United States and Britain in providing arms to the Afghan mujahedeen, just as, in Southeast Asia, there was Chinese-U.S. collaboration in Cambodia. When the United States sent its naval forces into the Persian Gulf in 1987, a spurious "peacekeeping" operation reminiscent of Lebanon and Korea, European ships joined in, thereby contributing to an escalation of the Iran-Iraq war and to its prolongation for several months. When the U.S. Navy shot down an Iranian civilian airliner in July 1988, killing all its passengers and crew, the Europeans were mute. The countries of the European Community made much of their desire to develop a common foreign policy; their most signal attempt to do so, the Venice declaration of 1980 on the Arab-Israeli dispute, petered out, and none of the major states were prepared to risk a clash with Washington on this issue.

Despite the passing fashions of the late 1980s, neither East-West competition nor the political challenge of the Third World can go away. As demonstrated so clearly in Afghanistan, there will be winners and losers in Third World conflicts, from Cambodia to Angola and Nicaragua, and the course of these disputes is to a great extent still formed by the East-West rivalry. □

THE S&L BAILOUT

Sticking It to The Taxpayers

DAVID CORN

When you, Mr. and Ms. Average American Taxpayer, receive your bill for the savings and loan industry bailout, don't blame Joseph Kennedy 2d, the young Democratic Representative from Massachusetts, or Bruce Morrison, a fellow Democratic member of the House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs. This past spring, while Congress considered the rescue plan presented by President George Bush, the two tried to turn the Administration's scheme upside down.

The basic thrust of the Bush proposal, which Congress accepted, is that the Federal government will borrow at least $50 billion to pay for closing down insolvent thrifts, with the taxpayers picking up the tab for thirty years' interest on this debt. Kennedy and Morrison, urged on by Ralph Nader's Public Citizen and the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (Acorn), called for a pay-as-you-go plan that would have raised two specific taxes—income tax for households making more than $250,000 and the alternative minimum corporate tax—and closed a loophole in the tax on inherited assets. In three years the $50 billion would have been collected, and American taxpayers would not have been saddled with the long-term debt envisioned by Bush. Not only would the Kennedy-Morrison measure have saved hundreds of billions of dollars in interest, it would have presented the bill to those most able to pay—those who, as a class, had most benefited from the high interest rates that accompanied the S&L frenzy of the 1980s. The plan's fate is another sign of the decline of the Democratic Party.

Kennedy and Morrison's proposed amendment to the S&L bill was thrown out of the Banking Committee in May. On March 2, the committee chair, Henry Gonzalez, had attended a press conference organized by Acorn, where Jesse Jackson and others called for funding the bailout through taxes on the well-off. But as it became clear that the Democratic leadership—especially Dan Rostenkowski, chair of the Ways and Means Committee—would brook no talk of new taxes, Gonzalez turned toward fighting for strong hous-

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ing provisions in the S&L bill. (He succeeded.) Not willing to buck Rosty and the party hierarchy, Gonzalez could do little for the Kennedy-Morrison proposal.

The pair then presented a watered-down version to the Rules Committee, though it was clear that Democrats and Republicans alike still did not want to engage in discussion over Bush's fundamental approach. But Kennedy argued for at least "an open debate as to whether or not the people that had the party are going to end up paying for it." He continued:

> None of the people who enjoyed the benefit of Lear jets, none of the people who enjoyed the benefits of brokered [S&L] deposits, those aren't the people that are going to be asked to bail it out . . . that are going to end up subsidizing a lot of high flyers. And it seems the Democratic Party ought to be willing to stand up, and, I think, the Congress in general ought to be willing to stand up to some of the powerful interests in this country.

Members of the Rules Committee politely heard the entreaties of Kennedy and the cooler, technical explanations of Morrison. Yet the two were guilty of having an idea that made sense but flew in the face of conventional political wisdom: They were calling for a tax hike. The Rules Committee would not allow their amendment to be debated on the House floor.

In Washington the rap on Kennedy is that he's no rocket scientist. And though Morrison is more widely respected and more reasoned in his approach—he fixes on the notion of equitable fiscal discipline rather than class-conscious populism—no one was really listening to him either. From the moment Bush forwarded his plan to Congress, a consensus set like quick-drying cement. There was no question that the government would make good on its promise to bail out depositors. But how, and with whose money, should have been the focus of an animated debate. The bailout plan, which could end up costing more than $300 billion, drew less attention than the proposed $24 million Congressional pay increase. Only Bush's early trial balloon for a depositor tax created a stir, and was rightfully attacked as an attempt to tax average Americans to save the thrifts.

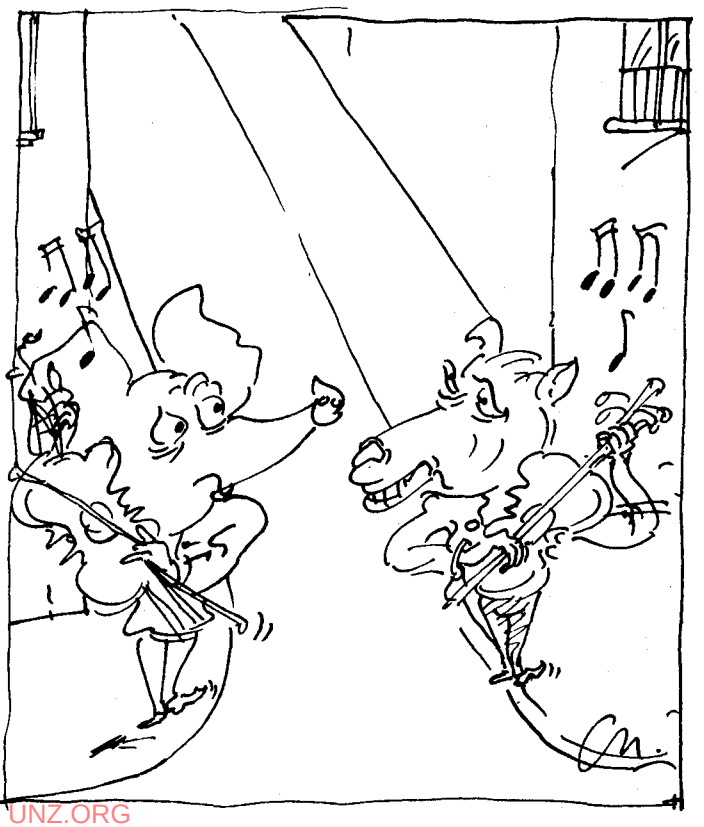
That's precisely what the Bush plan does. While it doesn't call for a new levy, it compels taxpayers to spend hundreds of billions of dollars for thirty years. If the economic assumptions of the plan do not hold, the price could soar even higher. And since the bailout is to be funded with borrowed money, its cost will be higher, due to the interest burden, than if the rescue had been financed by new revenues.

Here was a golden opportunity for the Democrats. Imagine the argument the Democratic Party could have made for the Kennedy-Morrison approach: "Why should the average American, who has only $2,000 in a checking or savings account, have to dish out anywhere from $1,000 to several thousand dollars? Other than those S&L executives who stole depositors' funds outright, the ones who gained most from freewheeling thrifts were the rich. They took advantage of the soaring interest rates available from the S&Ls, whether fraudulently run or solvent, and from banks who were competing with the irresponsible thrifts. Sure, this is a tax, but a straightforward, fiscally responsible tax applied only to the very well-off—not a sneaky, hidden tax that will be stuck to working-class Americans for thirty years."

Kennedy and Morrison hoped to provoke that kind of talk. But their strategy depended on two things: that the Democratic Party would act like a real opposition party and that the Democratic affinity for working-class and low-income Americans is more than a myth. There was indeed popular sentiment to be tapped: On Capitol Hill, a videotape of a *Donahue* show on the S&L crisis, during which angry audience members wondered why they had to bear the brunt, was passed from one Congressional office to the next.

But the Democrats chose not to ride the wave of outrage. Still reeling from Read My Lips trauma, Democrats are spooked by any mention of taxes. Many told Morrison that the only taxes with which they dare associate are those Bush proposes. The party clearly is unable to articulate the difference between a tax on the rich and a tax on the rest of us. Kennedy and Morrison tried to make it easy by urging an end to the infamous trail-off in income tax rates, whereby the marginal tax rate on income higher than $250,000 for a family of four drops from 33 percent to 28 percent. But Democrats live in fear of Republican National Committee chair Lee Atwater and the G.O.P.'s demagogic skills. Of course, even in a non-Atwaterian world, not every Democrat would be inclined to boost a tax bill for the well-heeled. But now those Democrats can find easy cover in the weak-kneed, it's-just-not-politically-feasible argument.

The party's failure to react more aggressively to the S&L crisis and Bush's plan prompts a question: Just whom does the Democratic Party think it represents? Morrison understated the case perfectly: "There is confusion as to where the long-term majority lies." This confusion is readily apparent



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on the issue of Bush's proposed cut in the capital gains tax. The House leadership has assailed it as an unfair tax break for the wealthy, but six Democrats on the Ways and Means Committee are threatening to defect.

"We need to find our soul and heart," Kennedy declared after losing the S&L battle. "We'll have to get them next year." Reminded that there will be no next year as far as the bailout plan goes, and that the taxpayers are already sunk, Kennedy exploded: "Can you believe all we're going to do is send this bill to our children! It is so wrong. . . . We continue to shove our problems under the rug. . . . It's so irresponsible. . . . Goddamn, what a terrible thing."

The Democrats would be wise to embrace some of Kennedy's populism and Morrison's rationalism. As the cold war de-ices, the party has a chance to place at center stage the economic issues with which it has traditionally scored well. Democrats need to do so to counter the effects of a demographic trend: People who fondly remember the New Deal are dying, and they are not being replaced by younger Democratic voters. If the party continues to steer away from confrontational economic politics—and toward big-bucks contributors and copycat Republicanism—it will be left with no real constituency, just funders. Taking a populist position on the S&L bill not only would have been right, it would have been smart. Joe Kennedy doesn't need to be a rocket scientist to know which way the wind blows. □

Hezbollah

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

with empty gestures. In a land where more than 20,000 people have been kidnapped since the civil war began fourteen years ago, Hezbollah has gotten more media mileage from a handful of Western hostages than have all the other parties combined—and this while denying ties to the tiny groups directly responsible for the kidnappings. By killing Lieut. Col. William Higgins—perhaps months ago—and threatening to kill Joseph Cicippio, the Islamic fundamentalist movement has not only managed to rivet the world's attention once again on itself but has come close to enticing the United States into another military misadventure.

Yet, while Hezbollah seems to be able to make the United States squirm at will, such is its powerlessness in Lebanon that its leaders hardly know what to do with the international leverage they now enjoy. They have no political goals that can be attained by bargaining off the hostages. Instead, they call for the release of Sheik Abdul Karim Obeid from Israeli captivity, along with several hundred Shiite and Palestinian prisoners, not because they are important in and of themselves but because they represent a humiliation by Israel. Sheik Obeids grow on trees in Lebanon, but humiliation can spark Shiite tempers to action—and, as in the past,

Ken Seigneurie is a freelance writer specializing in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Tarek Nassar is the pseudonym of a Lebanese journalist who lives with his family in West Beirut.

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Israel is gifted in providing the necessary jump-start. This time, however, Hezbollah has little to gain: With or without Sheik Obeid, a few million dollars or none, Hezbollah will remain a marginal force.

This was not always the case. In the beginning Hezbollah's Islamic revolution had much going for it, not the least being history and demography. By 1982, Lebanese Shiites numbered 1 million, almost a third of the country's population. Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese had been killed, wounded or impoverished by the fighting and nearly 1 million had fled their homes. The Shiites, poor and displaced in the suburbs of the cities, bore the brunt of these hardships. In addition, those in the south of the country, traditionally Shiite for centuries, endured the worst of the Israeli bombing raids, which have pounded all of Lebanon, but especially the south, since 1968. Worst of all, the leadership of the Shiite movement Amal (Hope) was fragmented and increasingly viewed as having forsaken the disinherited masses in favor of the middle class. Words like "oppressed" and "humiliated" began to fly from Shiite throats.

When Israeli forces invaded Lebanon on June 6, 1982, the radical element of the Shiite community at last found a threat that merited the extreme measures it was their wont to propose. While Palestinian and leftist forces were losing ground in the onslaught, a covey of Shiite clerics with Iranian help were nurturing Hezbollah. By 1983 the *husseinyia*, or Shiite mosques, echoed with the clerics' calls for believers to wage God's war against the invader.

The movement—Hezbollah activists refuse to call it a party in the common sense of the word or even admit that it is an organized group, since they lay claim to being the Moslem nation itself—benefited from a remarkable unity of purpose. Its leaders were for the most part Shiite clerics educated in the Iraqi city of Najaf, where Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini had held forth from 1965 to 1978. It was the Ayatollah, with contacts in Lebanon dating back at least to the early 1970s, who appointed the Hezbollah leadership. They shared a common view of the Islamic state that rejected out of hand both Western liberal democracy and atheist Soviet doctrine, urging followers to invoke God's help in the struggle against "abomination"—the most compelling word in the ethos of Shiite jihad.

Their plan for Lebanon was to install a supposedly pure, back-to-basics form of Islamic government: Citizens of all persuasions would be protected under an all-encompassing Moslem system fusing the civilian, religious and political spheres of society. Iran was to be the model. This paralleled the Christian Lebanese Forces' efforts to create a pure, secure Christian fortress-state along the lines of the state of Israel. One system would engulf all non-Moslems under Moslem rule; the other would exclude from real participation all non-Christians. Each aimed for the same result—control over the opposing community.

Hezbollah's ranks swelled quickly, and not only because of its appeal to hearts and minds. By 1983, Iran was funneling $7 million a month into Lebanon. Militiamen were well paid, university cells sprang up and hospitals and schools saw the light of day under the benign eye of Khomeini. Unlike other militia forces, Hezbollah did not tax the people under its jurisdiction. The appeal to a despised and forgotten population was immeasurable. By comparison, other would-be friends of the anti-Israeli resistance—Syria, for example—had always sent little money and many soldiers, whose purpose was mainly to occupy as much of Lebanon as the Israelis deigned leave them.

Hezbollah grew at Amal's expense. Indeed, a splinter group, Islamic Amal, led by Hussein al-Moussawi, participated in the founding of Hezbollah. Over the years a significant number of Amal militiamen crossed over to Hezbollah, often along clan lines. In its early days Hezbollah also benefited from Amal leader Nabih Berri's policy of burning no bridges. Thus, not only was the movement able to sap Amal's human resources, it also retained contacts with the elder, more pragmatic Shiite organization without making the slightest concession to it. Perhaps most important, Hezbollah seemed capable of attracting a wide Moslem following. Numerous Sunni leaders threw their weight be-

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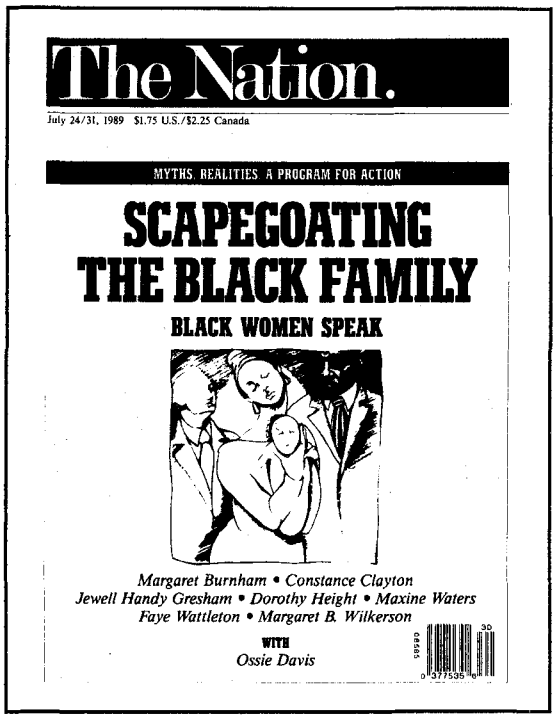
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hind Hezbollah early; none had ever supported Amal.

Important as Hezbollah's appeal was to young warriors who saw the movement as a means to power, it also held considerable enchantment for the masses of Shiite supporters, most of whom could contribute little more than hope for its success. More than a mere sympathizer was "Ali," a student in engineering at Lebanese University, located in Beirut's southern suburbs. Speaking on condition that his real name not be revealed, as nearly all Lebanese now do, he admitted to being an active member of the Hezbollah cell at the university, leading discussion groups and recruiting new members. Though he did not participate in military activities, and thus received no financial compensation, he was a fervent Hezbollah activist. Ali was among the thousands who marched through Beirut's southern suburbs in the summer of 1985 in the Shiite celebration of Ashura. (Ashura is a commemoration of the death of Mohammed's grandson in a military last stand against an attack by members of what was to become the Sunni branch of Islam. Ever since, Shiism has been the religion of the oppressed.)

An even-tempered man of 25, Ali spoke of the reigning hypocrisy of Lebanese politics when asked about what moved him to choose Hezbollah: "I wanted an ideology that doesn't lie," he said. "We'd lost hope in all the Lebanese political movements." Islam offered an absolute, universal ideology and way of life in addition to spiritual succor. "Islam is justice," he said, an ontological truth that irks many non-Moslems when Hezbollah sympathizers throughout Lebanon invoke it to support Hezbollah's aims.

Hezbollah's appeal to the heart—the thirst for justice, the passion to perform God's will and the struggle to recover pride and power—combined with Iranian strategic support to thrust the movement within a hand's reach of imposing its will on a good portion of Lebanon by 1986. Early that year, while other students at Lebanese University increasingly looked abroad for their futures, Ali rejoiced in the continuously deteriorating Lebanese situation. Like all true revolutionaries, he hoped for the worst, knowing that the weaker the state became, the stronger his movement's appeal. He urged Christian friends to reject the corrupt Lebanese confessional system and embrace not necessarily Islam but the Islamic system of government as espoused by Hezbollah. Ali's commitment to Hezbollah, though very strong, was basically an intellectual and heartfelt re-embrace of Islamic morality. But his criticisms of the Lebanese system and the West seemed somehow sterile. His discourse on how "America has absolutely nothing to do with true civilization since money and efficiency are the only things taken seriously there" could almost have come from any disaffected West European intellectual.

"Abbas," also 25, was another activist and one of the leaders of the Hezbollah cell at Lebanese University. Stocky, with brown eyes set in a round, cheek-filled face, he has an almost childlike mien, despite the beard of a Hezbollah militant. His home is in the Shiite fiefdom of Bourj el-Barajneh in Beirut's southern suburbs. Its bare walls, sparse furniture and conspicuous disregard for interior decoration give the impression of temporary quarters,

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though Abbas and his family have lived there for years. Wearing pajamas, as men often do at home in the Middle East, Abbas spoke easily about Hezbollah and its aims. A few cassette tapes of Koranic verses strewn on the dusty floor provided the only external clue of his commitment to the Islamic fundamentalist movement. Like Ali, he too shunned direct military involvement, but on the other hand supported everything done in the name of Hezbollah or the Islamic terrorist groups. Following an extended trip to France, he boasted in front of his aghast parents that he had done large-scale shoplifting there. "France colonized us and stole our wealth. We have the right to recover it."

Almost from the beginning, the strengths of Hezbollah were also undermining the movement's long-term success. The group's zeal for justice soon curdled into the run-of-the-mill vengeance common to revolutionary movements throughout history. For Abbas, the suicide car-bombing of the American and French multinational forces in October 1983 was a glorious affair. He claims, "They were sucking our blood, so we got them back." The hijacking of a Trans World Airlines 747 in June 1985, which ended with the death of Robert Stethem, a U.S. sailor, was backed by similar reasoning. But other Hezbollah supporters were not so convinced, unable to forget that the shedding of innocent blood is forbidden in the Koran. The moral debate within the Lebanese Shiite community over tactics in dealing with "the Great Satan" was, in general, not sufficiently appreciated by the Western press.

The more traditional Shiite group, Amal, has always been quick to condemn terror. Likewise, independent Shiite personalities belonging to neither Amal nor Hezbollah (such as the former President of the National Assembly, Kamel el-Assaad) have consistently spoken out against hostage-taking. Even Hezbollah spiritual leader Sheik Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, whose name is often mentioned in the Western press synonymously with terror, has never condoned terror and hostage-taking. He *is* an Islamic revolutionary, make no mistake; but he is foremost a spiritual leader. During the current crisis over the fate of Joseph Cicippio, he pleaded with the kidnappers to spare their hostage, exhorting them: "Oppressed brothers, be better than they, your oppressors." Strategically speaking, such debate surely doesn't count for much, especially in times of war. But in the long-term battle for hearts and minds, money and support, it was a factor in Hezbollah's decline.

Likewise, Hezbollah's certainty that it and it alone was performing God's will led the movement into its gravest strategic error, that of following an overweening pride. Given that "God was on Iran's side," as Abbas put it, the very notion of alliance with an earthly power was seen as weakness and frankly sinful. Thus, in a land where one needs—sometimes desperately—all the friends one can get, Hezbollah went about repulsing real and potential allies. The Lebanese left, mainly the Communist and Syrian Social Nationalist Parties, was rejected early on because of its secular ideological leanings. Amal, which could conceivably have provided the second prong of an awesome Shiite alliance,

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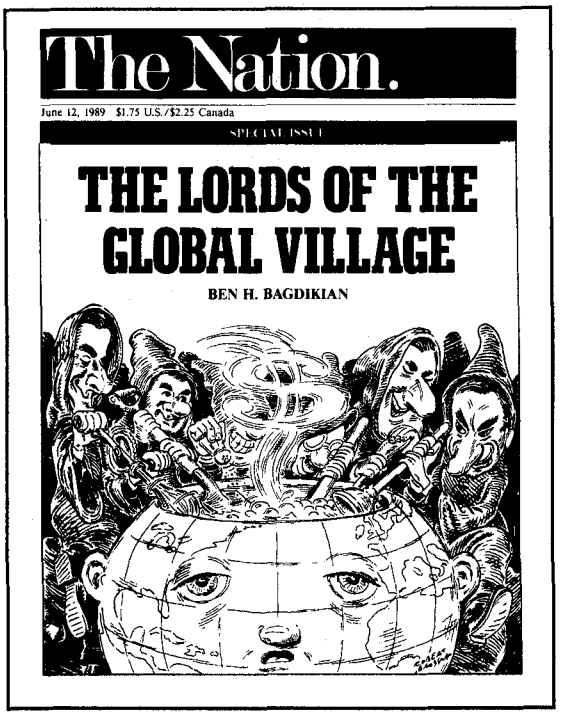

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was consistently shunned, setting the scene for a conflict that would eventually lead to history's first recorded instance of internecine Shiite warring. In the end, Amal expelled Hezbollah from southern Lebanon in April 1988.

Perhaps the height of Hezbollah's arrogance was attained in the fall of 1986, when its militiamen apprehended a dozen Syrian military personnel in West Beirut for no clear reason. Before they were through, the Syrians had been beaten, shorn and otherwise humiliated. So it was that several months later, on February 24, 1987, when the Syrian Army invaded West Beirut, a detachment of the notorious Syrian Special Forces swept into Hezbollah headquarters on Fathallah Street and killed two dozen militiamen. Hezbollah vented its rage the following day in an armed demonstration in Beirut's southern suburbs, and Shiite clerics condemned the "massacre." But with few allies aside from Iran, Hezbollah had little leverage.

Eighteen months later, in the spring of 1988, Hezbollah did everything in its power to prevent Syrian forces from entering Beirut's southern suburbs, not hesitating to wage—and win—a bloody confrontation with their Shiite brethren in Syrian-backed Amal in some of the war's fiercest fighting. It was combat literally down to the last alley, for, as Abbas said, "If we let them take our place here, we'll have to give in to them everywhere." Ominously, he added, "Without a role in the capital, we've got nothing." The battle left 300 dead and some 1,000 wounded, but Hezbollah came out of it lord of the southern suburbs.

Yet outside Hezbollah's enclave, Syria controlled all except the suburb's border with Christian East Beirut, setting up another of the bitter ironies with which this war is rife—Hezbollah began receiving supplies from its arch-foe, the Christian Lebanese Forces. Later in the summer of 1988, with Iran on the brink of sipping the poison of peace with Iraq and in no shape to be calling Syria's bluff, Syrian infantrymen entered Beirut's southern suburbs.

All but eliminated from southern Lebanon by Amal, dominated by Syria in the Bekaa Valley, Hezbollah still clings to a tenuous, Syrian-granted role in parts of the capital's southern suburbs. Its leaders continue to hold meetings in the universities, but few people attend. Last summer, following the downing of an Iranian airliner by the U.S.S. Vincennes in the Persian Gulf, Hezbollah organized a demonstration in the southern suburbs of Beirut—just the sort of gathering that four years ago would have drawn a sea of supporters. A mere thousand showed up. Most recently, Iran's new President, Hojatolislam Hashemi Rafsanjani, promised Amal leader Nabih Berri that Iran would no longer seek to export Islamic revolution. Without strong Iranian support, Hezbollah has been forced to ally itself with Amal, clearly as the weaker partner.

As for Ali, he stopped "talking politics" in late 1987. Having graduated from the university, he was unable to find a steady job after poking around in the ruins of the Lebanese economy over the course of several months. His involvement with Hezbollah tapered off and ended in March 1988 when, unemployed and disillusioned with the Islamic fundamentalist movement, he packed his bags and set out for the United States. Prodded about the irony of his choice, he shrugged and said laconically, "In America, I can work."

Abbas remains in Beirut. His commitment to the ideals of Hezbollah remains unshaken, though he is quieter about it. The Iran/*contra* scandal, which was as serious a blow to the reputation of Iran as it was to that of the United States, had no effect on him. Even after the fratricidal conflicts with Amal and the Syrian entry into Beirut's southern suburbs, both of which many former Hezbollah supporters believe Iran could have prevented, Abbas stayed faithful. America is still a country of "infidels," though he has not excluded the possibility of going there someday for "pragmatic reasons," without renouncing his beliefs.

Though weakened and isolated, Hezbollah is still far from dead. It remains a force to be reckoned with as a militia, as a source of revenue and as an alternative movement to existing power structures. It has carved out a niche in a society that seems able to endure limitless division. But it has failed utterly in its bid to gain widespread support and unify the country according to Islamic principles. It has not only failed to quell the Christians and unify the Moslems, it has failed among the Shiites themselves, who are divided more than ever among all manner of religious and secular currents. If anything, Hezbollah has contributed to widening the gulf between communities rather than bridging it. In decline, Hezbollah differs little from the rest of Lebanon's foreign-financed warring parties. The movement has succeeded only in demonstrating the cruelty that can arise from the righteous wrath of the downtrodden. □

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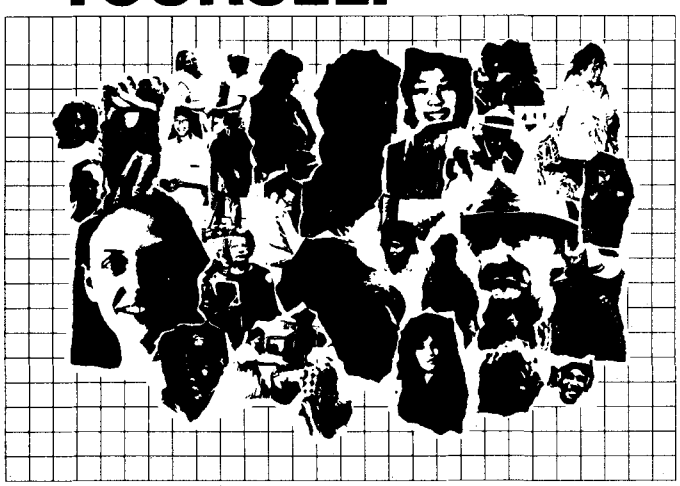

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Law Profs Fight the Power

JON WIENER

Minority legal scholars have become the target of an attack in the *Harvard Law Review* that has aroused anger among law professors who study civil rights. Its author, Randall Kennedy of Harvard Law School, is himself black. Kennedy criticizes those who argue that "intellectual contributions of scholars of color are wrongfully ignored."

Kennedy's attack reflects the fact that something genuinely new is happening in the world of minority legal scholarship: A body of work is appearing that is radically different from the typical law-review fare, not only in content but also in form. "The traditional way of doing legal scholarship doesn't do justice to our experience," says Harvard Law School professor Derrick Bell. "We need new ways of addressing a situation many of us feel is abominable. But minorities who are trying to blaze new trails in legal academia are meeting opposition and silencing."

The work challenges the way knowledge is constructed by the legal profession and addresses the relationship between knowledge and power. Articles by the new legal scholars of color draw explicitly on personal experience, include storytelling and family history, and mix dreams and fantasies with the more familiar apparatus of scholarly citations and analysis of cases and court decisions.

In the process, the authors—like many feminist scholars—reveal much more about their own lives than one finds in conventional legal writing. "Mainstream legal scholars write as if there's only one way of knowing the world," says Mari Matsuda of the University of Hawaii School of Law. "They all write with the same universal authoritative voice. But when you read Chuck Lawrence and Pat Williams, you feel you have a personal relationship with them and with their families; you get an idea of what it was like for them growing up. Scholarship for them is not an abstract intellectual process divorced from experience." The profession's response to the emerging minority legal scholarship, she argues, "is like the first responses to the work of Jackson Pollock or Charlie Parker: Some people say, 'It's self-indulgent, I don't know what it means, I don't like it, it's no good'; others say, 'This is brilliant.'"

Bell is the best known and most prolific of this group. In 1985 the *Harvard Law Review* published his "Civil Rights Chronicles" (included in his book *And We Are Not Saved*), which provided the first and in many ways still the most important example of the new voice and form of minority legal scholarship, posing a radical alternative to the standard article. Bell describes the pieces as a "fantasy" in which he has created a second voice in addition to the author's, to pose radical criticism of civil rights law, including his own work and commitments as a legal scholar. At the same time, the dialogue between his voice and the second in the "Chronicles" bristles with 214 footnotes, which demonstrate the massive legal scholarship Bell commands.

The "Chronicles," Bell writes, were told to him by "Geneva Crenshaw," a civil rights lawyer and activist from the 1960s who has "strange and allegorical visions." In "The Chronicle of the Celestial Curia," Geneva criticizes reliance on the courts for social justice. "Doesn't your lingering attachment to civil rights litigation stem from the exciting and rewarding career it has offered you?" Geneva asks Bell. He replies, "I must confess . . . that few of those we represented have been able to achieve the status we have gained as a direct result of our efforts on their behalf. For many of us, that realization tinges even the greatest personal success with a bitterness that outsiders may have difficulty understanding." To find such a statement in the *Harvard Law Review* is astonishing.

In "The Chronicle of the DeVine Gift," Geneva argues that even if qualified black candidates were available for jobs at an elite, predominantly white law school, the white faculty would limit the minority presence to 25 percent of its numbers. Bell then asks whether the courts would accept such a limit under the doctrine of the "tipping point," according to which the New York City Housing Authority was for several years allowed by the Federal courts to limit the number of apartments it made available to minorities on the ground that without such limits the number of minority residents would reach the "tipping point," and whites would move out—thereby creating a newly segregated community. Bell asks, if the tipping point applies to housing, why wouldn't it apply to law school faculties?

Kennedy criticizes Bell, arguing that his "Chronicle" substitutes "mere assertion" for "a careful, detailed exposition," and that Bell "avoids a central issue," the "pool problem," which Kennedy defines as the "apparent inability" of minority scholars, for a variety of reasons, to meet law school employment criteria "that seem innocuous and relevant" but have "disastrous consequences for minority candidates." Unless Bell can show that enough qualified minority candidates exist to fill 25 percent of Harvard's law faculty positions, Kennedy argues, the "Chronicle" is "absolutely self-defeating."

In an interview Bell replied, "I'm not forgetting the pool problem. Hell, everybody knows about the pool problem. In the article I go beyond that. I talk about the resistances hiding behind the pool problem. I explained this to Kennedy, but he continues to say I've avoided the pool problem."

Richard Delgado, of the University of Wisconsin Law School, set off the current controversy with a 1984 article in the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, "The Imperial Scholar." Bell calls it "an intellectual hand grenade, tossed over the wall of the establishment as a form of academic protest." Delgado analyzed the work of the most-cited scholars in civil rights law—all white males—and found that their citations were primarily of one another, with very few citations of minority scholars. "Paul Brest cites Laurence Tribe. Laurence Tribe cites Paul Brest and Owen Fiss. Owen Fiss cites Bruce Ackerman, who cites Paul Brest and Frank Michelman, who cites Owen Fiss and Laurence Tribe and Kenneth Karst . . . an inner circle of about a dozen white, male writers comment on, take polite issue with, extol, criticize, and expand on each other's ideas," Delgado writes. By failing to cite the work of scholars of color, he argues, those voices have monopolized the field and made it difficult if not impossible for minorities to break into their elite ranks.

Mari Matsuda makes a somewhat different case in her 1988 article in the *Har-*

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vard Women's Law Journal, "Affirmative Action and Legal Knowledge," in which she calls for "specific action to end the apartheid in legal knowledge. . . . Human beings learn and grow through interaction with difference, not by reproducing what they already know," she writes. "A system of legal education that ignores outsiders' perspectives artificially restricts and stultifies the scholarly imagination." Where Delgado emphasized that the white elites ignored minority legal scholarship, Matsuda emphasizes that some of the most relevant writing by people of color and women is found not in law-review articles but in "position papers, briefs, speeches, oped pieces and other non-academic publications," including fiction, history, biography and autobiography written by people of color. Most important for Matsuda, "The new voices will emphasize difference."

Kennedy, a contributor to *The Nation* [see "*Brown* Plus 35," May 29], was recently voted tenure at Harvard. Among the scholarly works he submitted for his evaluation was a draft version of his *Law Review* article. There he criticizes the new minority scholars because they have "this eager yearning to perceive and celebrate . . . differences between racial groups"; because their celebration of difference has had the "negative consequence" of "segregat[ing]" people of color "from the main currents of American culture." They are making "racial generalizations" that "derogate from the individuality of persons insofar as their unique characteristics are submerged in the image of the group to which they are deemed to belong." He singles out Matsuda, arguing that she "simply *presumes* that any scholar of color will have undergone the experience . . . [of] racial victimhood."

Patricia Williams, one of the new black legal scholars, responds, "Randy's article is a representative response from the academy to new black voices. He is saying, 'Prove that racism exists.' I'm not going to do that. I take American history as given, and work with the results. In the ideology of legal style this is called 'unscholarly'—especially if it's done in the first person."

Delgado says, "I disagree strongly with the view that minorities do not have a distinctive experience. They can place themselves outside it, they can disregard their experience. That's what he has done." Nell Painter, a black historian at Princeton University, points out that Kennedy's article arguing that blacks do not share a distinctive experience begins with a quotation from Ralph Ellison. "That's characteristic of the way black scholars write about race—they endow other black voices with authority," Painter says. "I'd be very surprised to see a white scholar start a law review article, or any scholarly article, by quoting Ralph Ellison."

Bell points out that "Randy's own work has been influenced by the fact that he is black. He went after an article of Benno Schmidt's, showing that Benno had glossed over some egregious things Supreme Court Justices of the teens and twenties had done on race. He showed they were some of the worst racists around. He did the same thing in his article on the death penalty. Not only did he criticize the majority of the Court for refusing to give weight to statistical evidence that was overwhelming in its proof that blacks who kill whites are more likely to get the death penalty than any other group, but he also criticized the dissenters who beat their breasts about the decision but did not acknowledge that the Court has never reversed a criminal decision on the basis of racial discrimination in the harshness of the penalty. That's the kind of contribution a scholar of color should be making, and that's the kind Randy has been making, and it's the kind I hope he will go back to."

Kennedy's most powerful argument is that Delgado fails to identify specific works by scholars of color that "deserve more recognition." The article Kennedy criticizes was published five years ago; in the past two years significant new work by minority scholars has appeared. Clearly Bell, Delgado and Matsuda are producing important work, and they are hardly the only ones. When other legal scholars are asked about people of color who are doing outstanding work, they suggest many additional names. Three that are on virtually everyone's list are Patricia Williams, Charles Lawrence and Kimberlé Crenshaw.

Williams, who has just joined the University of Wisconsin law faculty, writes in an intensely personal voice that is unlike anything that's ever appeared in law journals; she has attracted the attention not only of legal scholars but of literary critics like Harvard's Barbara Johnson, who says Williams "writes with a short story writer's sense of pace and vividness, with a literary theorist's sophistication and with a lawyer's attention to detail and passion for justice." The best example of Williams's work is the essay "On Being the Object of Property," published in the feminist journal *Signs*; it is impossible to paraphrase, partly because she draws on different styles of persuasion and makes connections on more than one level.

The essay begins with Williams's great-great-grandmother, a slave in Tennessee impregnated by her master when she was 11 years old. Williams connects that experience with the Baby M case: "My great-great-grandmother's powerlessness came about as the result of a contract to which she was not a party; Mary Beth Whitehead's powerlessness came about as a result of a contract . . . that she signed . . . yet which, over time, enslaved her," and "made her and her child helpless in relation to the father." Under slavery, black people were bought and sold; now "it is white children who are bought and sold, [and] black babies

IN THIS REVIEW

Derrick Bell, *And We Are Not Saved* (Basic Books, 1987).

Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law," *Harvard Law Review*, Volume 101 (May 1988).

Richard Delgado, "The Imperial Scholar: Reflections on a Review of Civil Rights Literature," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, Volume 132 (March 1984).

Randall Kennedy, "Racial Critiques of Legal Academia," *Harvard Law Review*, Volume 102 (June 1989).

Charles Lawrence, "The Id, The Ego, and Equal Protection: Reckoning with Unconscious Racism," *Stanford Law Review*, Volume 39 (January 1987).

Mari Matsuda, "Affirmative Action and Legal Knowledge," *Harvard Women's Law Journal*, Volume 11 (Spring 1988).

"Minority Critique" issue of *Harvard Civil Rights Civil Liberties Law Review*, Volume 22 (Spring 1987), with articles by Richard Delgado, Mari Matsuda and Patricia Williams.

Patricia Williams, "On Being the Object of Property," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Volume 14 (Autumn 1988).

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have become 'worthless' currency to adoption agents—'surplus' in the salvage heaps of Harlem hospitals."

Unlike Bell's "Chronicles," Williams does not illustrate arguments through storytelling. "I borrow devices from fiction," Williams explains, "but I don't fictionalize. I use my own dreams, hallucinations and fantasies, as a way of empowering less authoritative ways of speaking." Harvard University Press will publish her book next year.

Lawrence, also a black civil rights scholar, teaches at Stanford University and is best known for "The Id, the Ego, and Equal Protection: Reckoning With Unconscious Racism," published in the *Stanford Law Review*. His article begins with the kind of personal narrative that has become a hallmark of the new minority scholarship: "It is 1948. I am sitting in a kindergarten classroom at the Dalton School." The teacher is reading *Little Black Sambo* to the 5-year-olds:

> I remember only one part of the story, one illustration: Little Black Sambo is running around a stack of pancakes with a tiger chasing him. . . . I . . . have heard the laughter of my classmates. There is a knot in the pit of my stomach. I feel panic and shame. . . . I am slowly realizing that, as the only black child in the circle, I have some kinship with the tragic and ugly hero of the story—that my classmates are laughing at me as well as at him.
>
> . . .
>
> I am thirty-three. My daughter, Maia, is three. I greet a pink-faced, four-year old boy on the steps of her nursery school. He proudly presents me with a book he has brought for his teacher to read to the class. "It's my favorite," he says. The book is a new edition of *Little Black Sambo*.

Lawrence goes on to challenge current doctrine that requires plaintiffs in discrimination cases to prove that the laws they are challenging were passed with an explicit "discriminatory purpose." With this requirement, Lawrence writes, "the Court creates an imaginary world where discrimination does not exist unless it was consciously intended." But a great deal of racism in our society is unconscious. Lawrence draws on Freudian theory and cognitive psychology, which suggest that some beliefs are "so much a part of the culture, they are not experienced as explicit lessons." Thus, "requiring proof of conscious or intentional motivation . . . ignores much of what we understand about how the human mind works," Lawrence writes. "It also disregards both the irrationality of racism and the profound effect that the history of American race relations has had on the individual and collective unconscious." His conclusion is that the requirement of proving conscious intent should be abandoned; "equal protection doctrine must find a way to come to grips with unconscious racism."

Crenshaw, who teaches at the U.C.L.A. Law School, is best known for "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment," a 1988 article in the *Harvard Law Review* that is less personal and more directly political than the work discussed above. In it she criticizes both neoconservatism and the leftist Critical Legal Studies school; both, she argues, fail to appreciate the force of racism in American society. The "Crits" maintain that the pursuit of equal rights has crippled black struggle: Blacks ought to fight for concrete goals like jobs and good schools and housing, the Crits argue, not for abstract legal principles like equal rights. In making this their goal, the Crits say, blacks participate in the legitimation of liberal ideology that functions to justify existing structural inequalities.

Crenshaw's response to the Crits' bashing of rights discourse is devastating: The problem for blacks is not the legitimation of liberal ideology but rather that they are "coerced into living in worlds created and maintained by others. . . . The ideological source of this coercion is not liberal legal consciousness, but racism." Although liberal legal ideology may serve as an obstacle to some goals, the fight for black rights—however abstract an end—plays a vital role in "combating the experience of being excluded and oppressed." Rights that other Americans took for granted were denied to blacks; as a result, Crenshaw writes, "Blacks' assertion of their 'rights' constituted a serious ideological challenge to white supremacy."

Kennedy, in an interview, said that minority legal scholars like Bell and Delgado, "are engaged in interest-group ethnic politics—the familiar move of playing the race card," and that he is "impatient with it, tired of it." Several of the leading white civil rights scholars, however, have a different view. Frank Michelman at Harvard is one of those Delgado had singled out in 1984 for not citing minority scholars. Asked to comment on the controversy, he replied, "Delgado and Matsuda have written forceful pieces; they raised important issues and caused me to think hard about those issues." Paul Brest, Dean of Law at Stanford, another of those Delgado identified in his article as not citing minority scholars, said, "Derrick Bell and Chuck Lawrence have influenced in a significant way the way I think about race discrimination. I think getting away from the traditional law review mode is almost always a good thing; to the extent that it illuminates ideas that simply wouldn't come forward, it has to be good. *And We Are Not Saved* has power because it is not an analytic article with lots of footnotes."

Kenneth Karst of U.C.L.A. Law School, author of a new book, *Belonging to America: Equal Citizenship and the Constitution*, added: "What I find so compelling about the work of these minority scholars is the way they put the reader in touch with the feelings of real people—particularly in Derrick Bell's 'Chronicles.' These writers are providing a kind of moral translation of their experience into terms that legal doctrine can deal with in addressing the harms of exclusion."

"The debate is about voice," Delgado concludes, "about making everybody speak one language. Certain cries of pain lose a lot in the translation. The whole idea of the dominant legal discourse is to limit the range of what you can express, the range of argument you can make. It requires that everything be buttressed by authority, by looking to the past. What happens in the law reviews is important because they are the perfect place to explore a broadening of the dominant discourse. For Kennedy to take us to task for urging experimentation with and broadening of that discourse is singularly unfair."

Legal scholars, Matsuda writes, need to develop "new skills of listening" to learn about minorities' experiences: "The voices bringing new knowledge are sometimes faint and self-effacing, other times brash and discordant. . . . We should strive to understand their origin and listen carefully for the truth they may hide." The outsider's voice, she concludes, "is likely to change the way we understand the world." □

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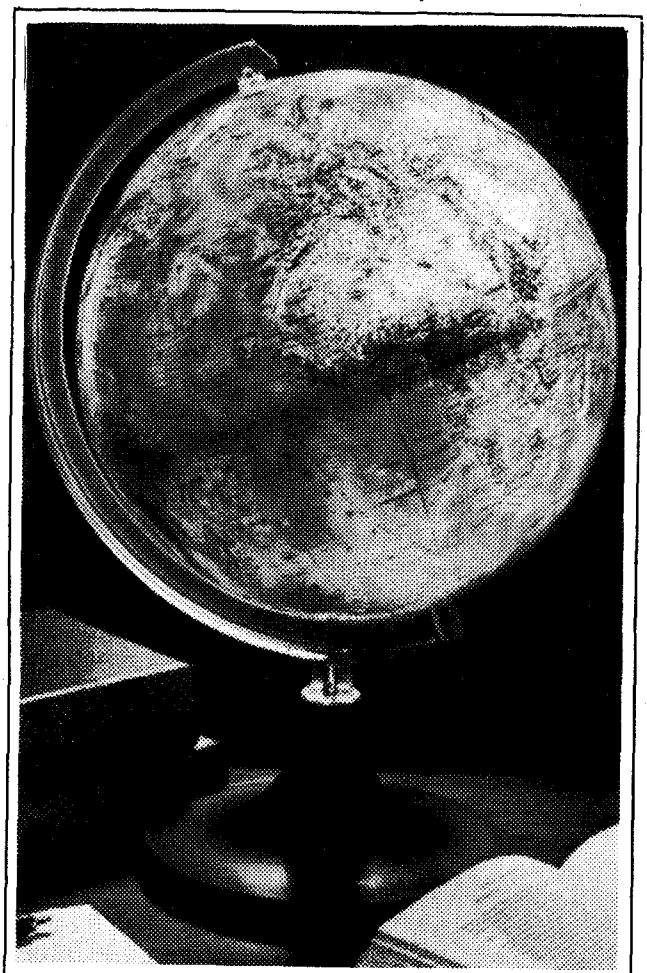

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FILMS.

STUART KLAWANS

Sex, lies, and videotape
Casualties of War
Distant Voices, Still Lives
Cannibal Tours

It is August on our little island off the mainland, that time when the year's ripest odors waft from parks where tens of thousands of the homeless sleep, while the more fortunate among us, seeking ninety minutes' air-conditioned comfort, must now pay $7.50. And the theater owners make you watch commercials, too.

Under the circumstances, I hesitate to pack you off to any film unless I'm pretty sure you'll love it, which is more than I can say for some of the following. The best of them, which I'm saving for last, are actually wonderful, though I make no pretense that they're ideal for a Friday night on the town. Besides, given how the film business works, they won't be playing in too many places on the mainland. Your only safe Friday-night bet, wherever you find yourself this summer, is still *Do the Right Thing*—that and *Lethal Weapon 2*, which is completely irresponsible and lots of fun. As for the other movies presently at theaters everywhere, you can categorize them as either disappointments (to various degrees) or disasters.

Sex, lies, and videotape and *Casualties of War* fall into the former category. They are not awful. Unlike, say, *Dead Poets Society*, they won't make you want to claw your way out of the movie house as though the theater, having turned into your coffin, were being lowered into the dirt. So, if you're in one of those blessed places where the tradition of the $2 matinee is still honored, you might want to try them. They are what the movie addicts call "interesting" films—which is to say, they're products of well-meaning and talented directors who have fallen short this time.

You might liken *Sex, lies, and videotape* to a blind date that goes bad. First comes the period of hope. The picture won the Palme d'Or at this year's Cannes Film Festival and comes recommended by people you trust, so you can hardly wait to lay eyes on it. And sure enough, when you finally meet, you feel an immediate rush of pleasure. You banter; you laugh; within half an hour, a fixed smile has settled on your face. That hot-looking number turns out to have a headful of stale air. While listening to the conversation decay, you tell yourself that the evening could still be salvaged, even without a meaningful relationship. And then, smiling sweetly, your date leans forward and slips you a Bible tract.

The experience would be less painful were the come-on less enticing. Steven Soderbergh, the film's writer-director, promises you sex, and that's what you get from the opening scene, in which Ann (Andie MacDowell), a Baton Rouge housewife, consults her psychotherapist. She looks like a Ralph Lauren ad come to life and talks with ditzy innocence. "And how's your marriage?" asks the shrink. "Oh, fine, fine," she assures him energetically. "I'm kinda goin' through this thing where I don't want him to touch me."

Her husband hardly seems to notice. John (Peter Gallagher) regularly sneaks out of his immaculate law office for the tumbledown artist's digs of Cynthia (Laura San Giacomo). She provides him with quick, hot sex, and he in turn offers her a chance for revenge. It seems that beautiful, eternally correct Ann is Cynthia's much-resented sister.

Into this somewhat incestuous triangle steps Graham (James Spader), an old college friend of John, who is returning to Baton Rouge after years on the road. Graham is Candide gone rancid. At first he seems more likable than troubled. With the worldly John as his foil, Graham explains that he lives out of his car because that way he needs only one key. If he were to rent an apartment he would need at least two keys, and if he got a job he might find himself with three. Where would it end? Graham's candor also seems fresh and lively. "Liars are the second-lowest life form on the planet," he informs John, who, as an attorney, also qualifies as first lowest. Soon, though, the film begins to hint that John's accuser is himself a mess.

Graham is impotent, except when practicing a form of voyeurism after the fact. He has spent his years on the road interviewing dozens of women about their sex lives. First he videotapes his subjects; then he watches the results in private and masturbates. That seems harmless enough to me. But to Soderbergh, Graham's little hang-up is not just masturbation—it's solitary vice. It's a failure to communicate. It's an abdication of responsibility. From the tone of the film, you'd think hair was going to grow on Graham's camera lens.

No sooner has Soderbergh let us in on Graham's highly symbolic habit than the pleasantly deadpan comedy turns into a contrived, claustrophobic morality play. The characters, who had seemed so odd and engaging at first, drop their peculiarities and turn into mere elements of a diagram. Ann is an ice queen, her sister a slut. Ann is afraid of sex, Graham impotent. Graham is an antimaterialistic truth-teller, John a yuppie liar. You could plot these characters on graph paper and see where their story is heading.

So why did this thin, painfully artificial fable win the big prize at Cannes? In defense of Soderbergh, I should note that the jury's decision was hardly his fault. He's merely a young director who got lucky. And, if his luck hadn't come in such abundance, I'd probably call *Sex, lies, and videotape* a modest, promising first film—nothing you'd want to rush out to see, but rewarding enough if you're in an indulgent mood. Soderbergh elicits fine performances from his cast; he writes dialogue that's amusing and for the most part sounds natural; he knows how to put a movie together like a pro.

If anything, though, Soderbergh is already too much of a pro. He is technically adept but seems to lack the infatuation with the camera that sometimes animates young prodigies. His direction is understated, efficient, neat as a pin—in a word, lifeless. Nothing happens just for the hell of it. The slow, relentless panning shots that stalk the actors; the details of decor, such as the copy of *Fear of Flying* on Cynthia's bedside table; the cross that Ann always wears around her neck: These are all as meaningful, and as willfully imposed, as the rather mechanical plot devices.

Soderbergh joins this prematurely middle-aged form to a late-adolescent content. He doesn't care about local color. (Though shot in Baton Rouge, the film could be taking place anywhere in North America.) He doesn't care about class. (Cynthia works as a bartender, but she's clearly slumming. In Soderbergh's world, it's assumed that everybody has money.) He doesn't even care about the quirks he's given his creations. (When a trait threatens to deflect the straight line of his plot, he abruptly alters the character, as when Ann, who has been a ditz throughout the picture, suddenly becomes wise in order to confront Graham.) All Soderbergh cares about, evidently, is sexual

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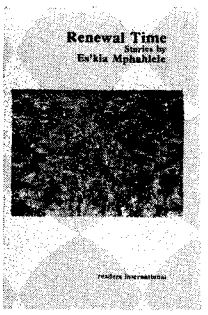

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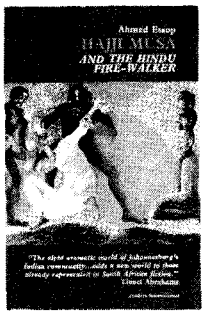

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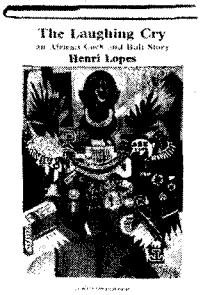
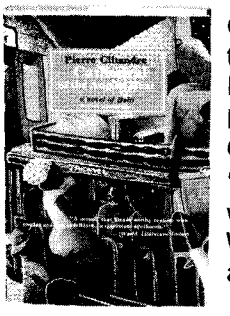


The Laughing Cry (033) by Henri Lopes (Congo) 'Satirical, tender, bawdy, savage and filled with love and hope.' *Washington Post*

'Mestre' Tamoda (031) by Uanhenga Xitu (Angola) 'The stuff of which modern African comedy is made' *N. Y. Times Book Review*



Cathedral of the August Heat (043) by Pierre Clitandre (Haiti) 'Encapsulates what the Third World is all about' London's *Guardian*

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TNA 29

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morality, as it is perceived by people in their mid-20s who are still brooding about the sins of college.

Take an unspecific but moneyed milieu, add four exceptionally pretty actors, have them fret about sex in a superficial way for ninety minutes, tack on a moral and film the whole thing with self-effacing care. What have you got? You've got French bourgeois comedy. If Soderbergh continues on the path he's chosen, he might eventually direct the first true American counterpart to *Cousin, Cousine*—which would be a waste of talent, to my way of thinking, but which also might be the reason the Cannes jury voted him the grand prize over Spike Lee.

Casualties of War has one virtue that is lacking in every other Vietnam War film I've seen: It makes you look at the face of the "enemy" for a good long time. The face, which in this instance belongs to a young peasant woman, is bloody and wide-eyed with terror. It is the face of someone who has been kidnapped, marched through the jungle and then gang raped. At the last moment, it is the face of a murder victim. But it is unquestionably an enemy face—the film's U.S. platoon sergeant is sure of that. Staring into the camera, which for the moment represents the point of view of the lone dissenter in his unit, the sergeant refutes all doubts by pointing to each of his men in turn, saying, "He's not V.C." No, *she* is the Viet Cong, this peasant who has been picked out at random from her village and carried away in the middle of the night. And that is the best thing about *Casualties of War*: At a time when apologists, not content with revising the war's history, seem ready to go on to the next stage and sentimentalize it, here is a film that shows you just who the G.I.s were fighting and just how they went about their job.

Unfortunately, that's also the only good thing about *Casualties of War*. The terrible disappointment is that the film was directed by Brian DePalma, whose movies generally threaten to jump off the screen and eat you. When he's worked up about his obsessions—which include sexual aggression, sexual fear and camera technique, not necessarily in that order—he can be shamelessly manipulative, not to mention downright ugly; but you can't complain that he's dull. In *Casualties of War*, though, even the most horrifying events seem to happen at a distance. For the first time in his career (precisely the wrong time, too) DePalma has not implicated the viewer in the film's action.

In fact, the point-of-view character is as blameless as though he were living in a Capra picture. Pfc. Eriksson (Michael J. Fox) has been in Vietnam all of three weeks and is still at the stage of handing out Hershey bars to the kids. His unit has been ambushed in a supposedly friendly village; when the survivors return to base camp, they are denied use of the local brothel without explanation. The sergeant (Sean Penn), fusing these two events in his overheated brain, decides on a plan of revenge. On their next long-range patrol, the unit will return to the village, capture a young woman and take her into the jungle for some "portable R&R." Fox is horrified, but he does not believe the plan will be carried out. Then, when he's proved wrong, he can do nothing to stop the atrocity. Unlike the usual DePalma protagonist, he doesn't even watch. Threatened with death if he interferes, sure to die in the jungle if he deserts, he can at best offer the poor woman some Ritz crackers and water from his canteen—and even that brings down the other men's wrath.

So Fox's character is morally off the hook. Back from patrol, he insists on reporting the incident to his superior officers, despite terrible risk, despite slaughter on all sides that makes the murder of one woman seem insignificant. He can even explain why he's going to all this trouble: In the words of David Rabe's screenplay—which spells things out as assiduously as do the directions on hot-air dryers in public restrooms—we cannot know the moment of our death, so we must be very careful what we do. "Maybe it matters more than we can know." Cue the celestial choir; bring on the Methodist chaplain, who will listen to Fox and blow the case wide open.

With that as its dramatic structure, *Casualties of War* frees the viewer from any sense of responsibility; and DePalma's casting distances the action still further. Perhaps the only Fox who would have been less credible in the lead would have been Samantha. As the sergeant, Sean Penn at least *looks* like the sort of man who gets high on rape and murder, though with him, too, you feel a distance from the character. He gives you Sean Penn portraying Robert DeNiro portraying the sergeant. With the remaining members of the unit being written and performed as caricatures, only Thuy Thu Le, as the victim, provides a full emotional charge.

And even her work is undercut by the film's unforgivable ending. In an epilogue set several years later, a young Vietnamese woman appears to Fox and tells him, in effect, that the war was just a bad dream. "It's over now," she says. Two million dead, for nothing—that was some dream, all right. Cue the celestial choir; fade out on the TV actor.

Terence Davies's *Distant Voices, Still Lives* also focuses its attention on a killer of sorts, in this case a working-class man who brutalizes his wife and children as if to prove to them that the world is just as blighted as it looks and they shouldn't expect anything better. It is as painful a film as you're likely to see; but, if you'll forgive the religious-sounding word, it's also illuminating. Though it's been months since I saw the picture—it played last fall in the New York Film Festival—entire sequences remain lit up in my mind, in full color, almost as if they were memories of my own life.

Though the film is a narrative, it moves freely in time. Davies has cut out all the explanations and connective passages; only the epiphanies are left, to be relived at their own pace, in the order that makes each one stand out most clearly. Many of them are harrowing. The son, who's become a soldier, stands before his father after a row and holds out a bottle in his bleeding hand, offering to settle the fight with a drink; the mother urges him to drink with his son, but the father merely stares. There's also a stunning scene in which the family and neighbors are gathered in an air-raid shelter during the blitz; in the silence, the father orders his young daughter to sing, and she dutifully steps forward to pipe out a thin, solemn chorus of "The Beer Barrel Polka."

But even at such a moment, *Distant Voices, Still Lives* is about emotional resilience and shared feelings as much as it is about pain and darkness. The counter to the family's suffering is the strength its members draw from the humblest of resources: the popular songs they sing in the pub. Some of the most beautiful sequences in the film—without affectation or sentimentality—are those in which the camera simply dwells on faces, as people pour their hearts into some corny, long-forgotten tune.

At those times, I felt Terence Davies had developed the directorial equivalent of perfect pitch. I cannot promise that you will love *Distant Voices, Still Lives*—it's too grinding in its subject, too uncompromising in its method to become

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much of a popular favorite, even among open-minded audiences. I can't even be sure you'll find it at the multiplex, where your local exhibitors are no doubt taking advantage of their ten screens to show *Batman* every fifteen minutes. But if you can get to a theater where it's playing, you might well find *Distant Voices, Still Lives* worth your $7.50. For a film that's this rare, in every sense, price should be no object.

Late news for offshore residents: One of the smartest films of the past year, Dennis O'Rourke's *Cannibal Tours*, will have a one-week run at New York's Film Forum, August 23-29. This feature-length documentary, reviewed here last fall when it played in the Margaret Mead Film Festival [October 31, 1988], elegantly reverses all one's assumptions about tourism and anthropology, and is funny too. A must see. □

MUSIC.

GENE SANTORO

Woodstock at 20

Twenty years ago, 400,000 people descended on the small upstate New York town of Bethel and congregated for three days on farmer Max Yasgur's land (leased for $50,000). There they saw an unprecedented (and still unmatched) collection of musical superstars at their peak, each of whom was paid less than $20,000 a set to appear at the Woodstock Music and Arts Fair. The event was an exercise in 1960s-style musical politics, based on the belief that music and culture could forge a community and communicate shared values. Live Aid, Amnesty International's tours, Farm Aid and the other now-common megaconcerts all developed from this example.

From May 1 through August 17 of this year, 277,800 viewers (MTV's typical daily audience, barely larger than *The Nation*'s readership) watched "Woodstock Minutes," 1½–3-minute spots culled from fifty hours of outtakes from Warner Bros.' *Woodstock: The Movie* and more recent interviews. Sponsors paid a premium rate for the right to participate in what Eric Frankel, Warner's marketing vice president for pay television, animation and network features, has called the "cornerstone of this promotion." In this way, MTV helped to avoid the peril foreseen by *Adweek* in March, "A glut of stories that dredge up Woodstock's darker side—free love, drugs, anti-war protests—will scare off major advertisers. . . . But if the media settles on a tamer twist . . . Woodstock will be sanitized as both a memory and a marketing tool."

The famous Woodstock logo, a dove perched on a guitar neck, can now be seen on T-shirts, jackets, buttons, mugs and ashtrays sold in department stores coast to coast, thanks to twenty licensees under contract with Warner Bros., which owns the rights to the logo. Original posters ($150) and tickets ($35) are available by mail order. And producers of everything from TVs to wine and computer magazines have evoked Woodstock in their ads.

All of this was set in motion a month after Woodstock, when the festival's promoters, Woodstock Ventures (Joel Rosenman, John Roberts, Artie Kornfeld and Michael Lang), sold 85 percent of the film and record album rights, as well as all broadcast and logo rights, to Warner Bros. The promoters got $1 million up front, but not until 1980 did the royalties wipe out their red ink from ticket losses and litigation.

Woodstock: The Movie won the best documentary Oscar for 1970 and remains the largest-grossing concert film (more than $40 million) ever. It's also one of the worst, as you will have realized if you caught one of the mid-August screenings on MTV. Which brings us to *Woodstock* and *Woodstock II*, the albums, among the worst compilation LPs from any event. But their nostalgia-market value clearly outweighs any musical merit: They've been reissued on compact disc not once but twice. Mobile Fidelity, an audiophile company, has put them out as a boxed set. Atlantic, the original issuing company, recently released the two albums as five single CDs.

The selling of Woodstock is no isolated instance: It's an excellent example of what's happened to rock culture over the last two decades. The increased purchasing power of onetime hippies has met the expanded marketing capabilities of the smaller number of more powerful conglomerates that now dominate the entertainment industry. One stark manifestation of that is the makeover of *Rolling Stone*. The magazine faced sagging revenues and circulation; to attract lucrative liquor and tobacco ads, it needed to shed just the countercultural aura on which it had once thrived. Hence the "Perception" (picture of a disheveled

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hippie) versus "Reality" (picture of a neatly suited yuppie) campaign of the Reagan years, which made clear who *Rolling Stone* was targeting as its audience. As a result, the magazine transformed its ad base and its content.

Rock music has become a bigger, more enduring business than nearly anyone dreamed of in 1969. Certainly the increasing use of classic rock tunes for commercials, the sponsorship of major rock tours and events by corporate underwriters, and rock-star endorsements—all of which would have provoked outrage at Woodstock—have become facts of daily life. Partly that's due to MTV, which serves as a bridge between Madison Avenue and rock and roll. If the commercials and the video clips that appear there often seem identical, it's because they're often shot by the same directors, using the same techniques and casts. That, rather than its pathetic ratings, is why MTV has finally broken into the black: Its importance to the entertainment industry is structural rather than statistical. Madison Avenue buys time on MTV to nurture a reciprocal relationship with the entertainment conglomerates. "This is a billion-dollar business," as Rockbill Inc.'s Jay Coleman said in *Adweek* of the Woodstock twentieth anniversary promotions. "It's not run by hippies smoking pot." □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Don Giovanni
The Dybbuk

The last play reviewed in this column, Charles J. Jenkins's *The Vigil*, was about a pair of unrepentent and irremediable black rapists who, balked in the pursuit of their peculiar happiness, divert their libidinal energies to the torture and humiliation of one of their own sex and race. By an uncanny coincidence I have just seen the same basic scenario reenacted at the Pepsico Summerfare Festival in Purchase, New York, only this time the occasion was the revival of Peter Sellars's staging of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. I hesitate to credit da Ponte as co-creator, since the contemporary meanings that Sellars imposes on the librettist's 202-year-old text represent the most radical recension of an opera that I've ever seen. Sellars's updated *Marriage of Figaro* at last year's Summerfare was reverent by comparison. However, like that *Figaro*, this *Don Giovanni* accomplishes the basic miracle of opera—making great music great theater—with more intelligence and moment-to-moment imaginative engagement than anything else currently produced. Often a riveting operatic moment doesn't bear thinking about when the riveting is over, but Sellars and his singers know how to block out even the longest *da capo* aria so that it has the affective momentum of a car chase. If only some higher power had the good sense to put him in charge of the Met or the State Opera! Meanwhile, I must be grateful to Pepsico for devoting so large a hunk of their last Summerfare budget to bringing back his stagings of the three Mozart/da Ponte operas, *Così fan tutte* as well as *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*.

One of the many greatnesses of *Don Giovanni* is its anatomy of the relation between Don Giovanni and his servant Leporello, a pair remarkable more for their likeness (in all things but the fortune of birth) than for the odd-couple complementarity of Quixote and Panza. One could conceive of a staging of the opera in which the Don figures as the libidinal daydream of Everyman/Leporello. Sellars, instead, has transformed their similitude into virtual identity, and heaven has assisted in the casting, for the roles are sung by identical twins—Herbert (Leporello) and Eugene (Don Giovanni) Perry. Never have the mistaken-identity complications of the second act seemed so plausible; the identical twins' exchange of their identical leather jackets becomes a droll irony instead of a mechanical necessity of the plot. The Perrys—and the rest of the cast—sing so well and so naturally that quite soon one is able to forget they are singing at all and to enter the empyrean of Grand Opera, where the events of the world fall naturally into the forms of arias, choruses and quartets.

And what a surprising world it is that this Don Giovanni and Leporello inhabit. It is our own everyday urban inferno of graffiti-scarred tenements, blood-soaked pavements and crumbling infrastructure (the gratingly ugly set was designed by George Tsypin, whose flashing yellow lights in Act II can cause retinal damage). Here Don Giovanni rules not by virtue of high birth or wealth but because he is reddest in tooth and claw, the top of the food chain. This staging reminds us that Macheath and Mack the

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Knife were his progeny.

What Sellars's and Mozart's *Don Giovanni* have in common is the theme of liberty in relation to the pursuit of pleasure, but Sellars dispenses with any concern for class conflict. While Don Ottavio (soulfully sung by Carroll Freeman) originally appears as a white cop in a black neighborhood, he soon doffs his uniform and appears as just another denizen of an asphalt jungle that also houses a Chinese Zerlina (Ai Lan Zhu) affianced to a black Masetto (Elmore James). Blacks and whites party together on refreshments stolen by Don G.'s gang of four thugs, characters so sinister they could have stepped out of a nightmare, and irredeemably corrupted by—at last we get back to Mozart—nothing less than *libertà*.

In Mozart the three basic constituents of the Don's libertine life style were that classic triad, wine, women and song. Song is essential to the Don's operations. His serenades open hearts and windows, and his private orchestras set the tone and the tempo for his parties. And the Don, in the words one might hear from his black box (the private orchestra at any libertine's disposal nowadays) "just wants to party all the time, party all the time, party all the time."

Women—and womanizing—are usually the central focus of the opera, its hero's purpose in life, but Sellars's Don cares for the ladies only insofar as his conquests add to his macho image. When first he sings to Donna Elvira (Lorraine Hunt, and brava to her), he only has eyes for Leporello. His Act II serenade to Zerlina is delivered with detumescent ennui. And Donna Anna reveals in her last aria that before he raped her and offed the Commendatore, he had introduced her to his own favorite bad habit. Dominique Labelle (bravissima!) as Anna has a stunning moment when, after a quick fix center-stage, she unleashes a soprano fusillade that parts company completely with the da Ponte text to become a kind of singing commercial for smack. What this *means* is that her guilty secret is not that she really wanted the Don to do what he did (a common interpretation) but that she was his customer, a sin that neither Don Ottavio (a narc) nor Westchester audiences are as likely to forgive.

So wine—as metonym for other abusable substances—turns out to be this Don's true love and the core of his libertinage, an interpretation that achieves take-off velocity in the Don's aria "*Fin ch' han dal vino*," customarily delivered as a rollicking drinking song. Eugene Perry, instead of flourishing the conventional goblet, punctuates the aria by smashing champagne bottles against a tenement wall, and rounds off by shooting up and seeming nearly to OD.

Obviously, not everything in the opera can be fit comfortably onto the Procrustean bed of Sellars's interpretation, even when the audience can be counted on not to comprehend the Italian text (though the singers, especially the Perrys, delivered their lines crisply). Sellars's solution is to treat those scenes that can't be accommodated as drug-induced visions or as complete phantasmagoria. The Don's showdown with the Commendatore and his being borne off to hellfire are emblematized by a stage effect that misfires, a coffin that rises into the air and then just dangles there to no purpose. I expect budget constraints were more to be blamed than the director. Hellfire isn't cheap.

What does it all mean? That the problems arising from libertinage—the selfish and heedless pursuit of pleasure—have become democratized, and damnation is available to all, in the form of crack, careless love and fast music. Sellars's *Don Giovanni* is that rare thing, a puritanical vision that fully appreciates the allure of vice. Not the decorative vices of an eighteenth-century pornotopia, but the real vices that make headlines every day. Sellars seems to be saying that the problem with drugs is not that addicts must resort to crime in order to maintain their addiction. (Sellars's Don is indifferent to money as such; he scatters bills like confetti even as he eats McTake-out.) Rather, Don G. and his friends use drugs in order to have the spacey courage to pursue their primary goals, which are mugging, rape and murder. Sellars does not extenuate or exonerate; his Don G. is guilty as charged, with no one to blame but himself. No wonder the production has ruffled so many feathers. It is not the indignities done to the text; it is the heretical statements Sellars is making about his society, and ours.

I wish I could express a fraction of the same enthusiasm for The Stary Theatre's *The Dybbuk*, which Summerfare imported from Kraków in a production directed by the filmmaker Andrzej Wajda. The 1914 play, originally written in Russian, was translated into Yiddish by its author, Szymon Anski, at the request of the director Stanislavsky;

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at Summerfare it was presented in Polish with simultaneous translation over headphones (though large hunks of the first act were rendered as static at the performance I attended). Even making allowances for what may have been lost in translation, *The Dybbuk* came across as lacking in energy, emotional focus and authenticity.

The last was the most painful lack, since one could not help remembering *why* a troupe of Polish actors should have so little empathy for the play's Hassidic milieu; they've only seen Hassidic Jews (if at all) in foreign films. The Polish people, needless to say, were not responsible for Nazi atrocities; on the other hand, they were not always ecumenical in those years when they might have been, and anti-Semitism is still said to flourish in Poland even in the absence of Jews to victimize. A dicey subject, therefore, and one that Wajda, unwisely, seeks to defuse by staging his play with the reverence and gravity of an oratorio. At the heart of his offense is having elicited a performance from Jan Peszek as Reb Azriel that makes this quintessential Hassidic rabbi come across as a compelling impersonation of the present Polish pope. One can't help but read this as Wajda's stage-whisper to his Kraków audience: "Look, the guy may be Jewish, but he's *holy*!"

Aside from being tasteless and sanctimonious, *The Dybbuk* offers lackluster performances, and the limpest of the lot is Aldona Grochal as the peasant girl who is possessed by the dybbuk of a dead yeshiva scholar whom fate (but not her father) had intended to be her bridegroom. Granted Anski's *Dybbuk* isn't *The Exorcist*; still, one expects *some* alteration in the manner of the maiden possessed. Grochal moves her voice to the alto register and that's it. The possibility of a psychosexual interpretation of the events of the play, which is as implicit in the text as in Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, is scarcely hinted at. I have been waiting to see this play since first reading it some thirty years ago, and I'm sorry to have witnessed it at last in so perfunctory a presentation. But there's always a silver lining: If Wajda ever wants to stage a reading of the poems and encyclicals of Pope John Paul he can dress Jan Peszek in exactly the same costume and he won't have to spend a zloty. □

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LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 226*)

sent from Bagdikian's wide-ranging treatment of his theme was any consideration of the three largest information consumer markets in the world: the Soviet Union, China and India, whose peoples constitute over one-half of the world's population.

While purporting to be a "global" survey of the risks inherent in greater centralization of information systems, in fact the article deals only with Western-based corporations and media moguls and the Western consumers affected thereby. But is not the centralized governmental control of the media in China and the Soviet Union, for example, as well as in various Third World countries, pertinent to this same theme? While most of Bagdikian's points are well taken and his biographies of media titans of great interest, nonetheless in an article that purports to treat a problem globally, the author has failed to deal with the important role of governments, whose ministries of information control as much or more than all Western corporations, large or small, can ever foresee controlling (barring a withering away of the state entirely, a prospect that does not appear imminent). To say, as Bagdikian does at the end of his article, that "the answer must be directed solely at the size of corporations" is surely an overstatement, if one is concerned with the circulation of information not only in the West but in the East and South as well. One hopes Bagdikian will write his next essay on the role of governments in the restriction of information transfer, a subject that complements his concern for ever-interlocking information networks by private-sector corporations in the West. *Carey N. Gordon*

BAGDIKIAN REPLIES

Berkeley, Calif.

Carey N. Gordon is obviously correct about the widespread governmental control of information around the world. It is so obvious that it seemed not to need the examination in detail demanded by the new and growing problem of private control, including in societies with relatively little official censorship. The entire last section of my article makes clear that all censorship, governmental and corporate, must be defeated.

Ben H. Bagdikian

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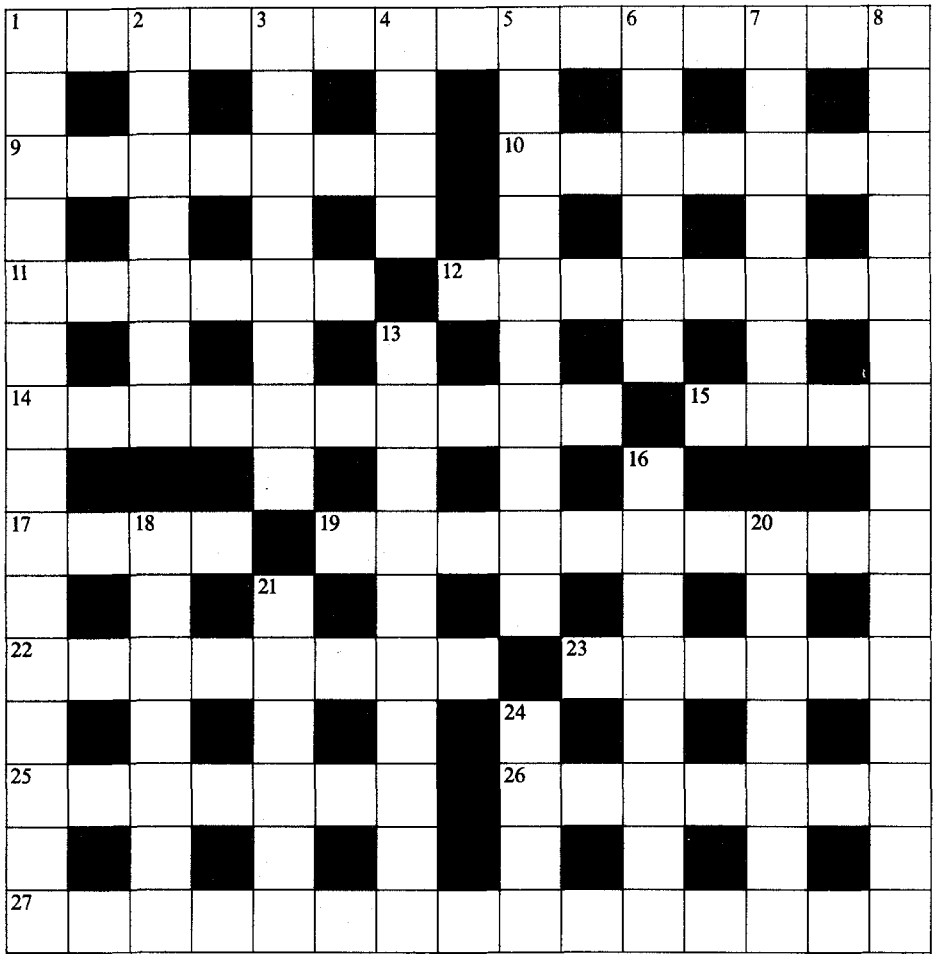
Crossword Puzzle No. 2255

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 What the actuary did might be taken by careful planners. (10,5)
9 What a deputy does might be facts, otherwise. (4,3)
10 After a short time, a continually dull pursuit comes back as a city/officer. (7)
11 The capacity of an abnormal growth to get on? (6)
12 Where "henfruit" is manufactured? (You might like it Parmigiana.) (8)
14 Evidently a possible union strategy is not very bright! Stop the talking—by an awesome act! (6,4)
15 Some show! It reveals a lot of open spaces tied together. (4)
17 These frequently end up in the pen. (4)
19 Passed after praise, according to the wartime air. (10)
22 What's the point in making music? It only shows you got too close to fire! (8)
23 Watering places, on paper at least, have brief spells of sudden energy. (6)
25 One might in particular form, annually. (7)
26 Live around the so-called upper class—or what is left of it. (7)
27 Not a single-shot development from them, as they might tell the truth about stand-ins for such as Wayne. (6,9)

DOWN

1 How one creates demons, in what a logical shift in thinking does. (7,4,4)
2 Not so big, but Ruth and Raymond would seldom start with it. (7)
3 Gets rid of the cure, possibly. (The victim is perhaps guilty of a clerical error.) (8)
4 and 24 Announces the fall—some people taking off from this. (8)
5 A tribal marriage might be, and finish with a headless dog and a tailless mouse. (10)
6 Sums up what some person does with old tires, perhaps. (6)
7 Took one's place at one, and had dinner—but too much food might do it! (7)
8 The rack might, but a stroll offers a better way to do it. (7,4,4)
13 Early gardeners, reputedly—obviously self-taught. (4,3,3)
16 Decides matters such as the attitudes of the Princess? (8)
18 Something that plays on the water in Paris, going around the top, perhaps. (7)
20 Possibly rides in like a trader, presently in ill-repute. (7)
21 Just say no, with this. (With the small-sized type, just call around for it.) (6)
24 See 4 down.

PUZZLE BOOK

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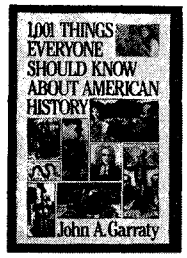

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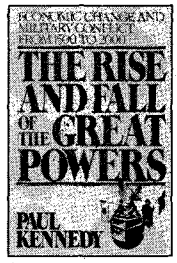

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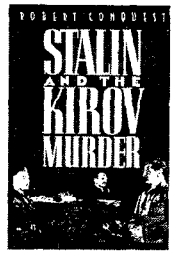

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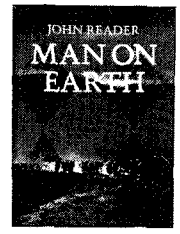

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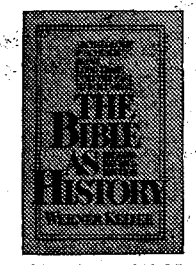

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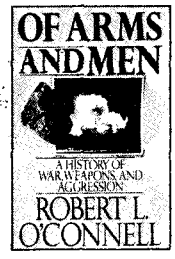

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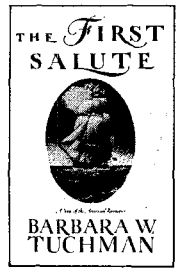

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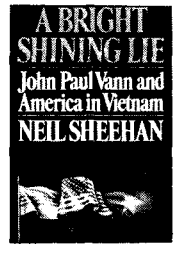

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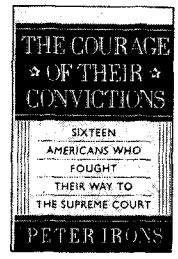

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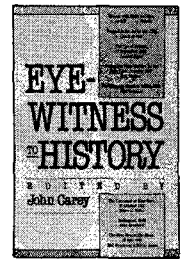

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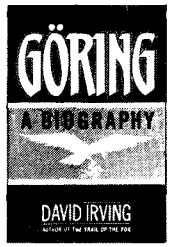

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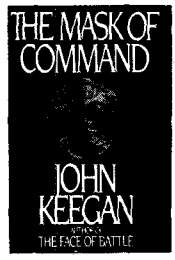

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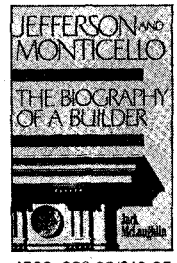

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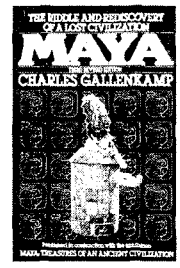

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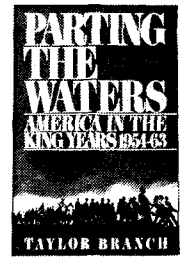

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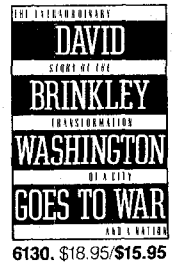

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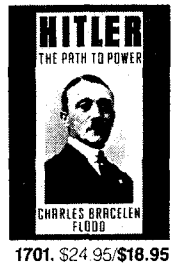

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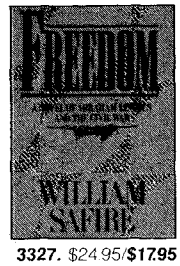

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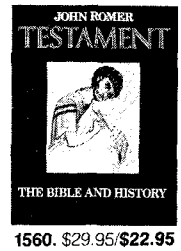

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